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CHARLES DICKENS

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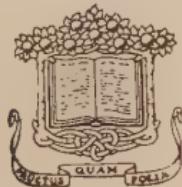
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POCKET UNIVERSITY  
VOLUME XXI                    PART I

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F I C T I O N

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## PREFACE

The burden of most of the comments in the prefaces and "guides" to this set of books is concerned with what the reader must try to do rather than with what the author has already tried to do. It therefore seems especially *apropos* that one of the volumes of fiction should carry a statement made by the greatest prose romancer of our century as to what he thinks is the purpose of the artist. We remember reading somewhere that if the *Magna Carta* were forgotten and the Declaration of Independence burned, the creed of all manly men could still be found in the poetry of Robert Burns. Our feeling is that if we had no other statement in the world on the subject, the creed of all artists worth the name could still be found in Joseph Conrad's *Preface* to "The Nigger of the *Narcissus*." There is not room for all of it here, but this selection will indicate what the rest of it is like.

"The artist, then, like the thinker or the scientist, seeks the truth and makes his appeal. Impressed by the aspect of the world the thinker plunges into ideas, the scientists into facts—whence, presently, emerging they make their appeal to those qualities of our being that fit us best for the hazardous enterprise of living. They speak authoritatively to our common sense, to our intelli-

## Preface

gence, to our desire of peace or to our desire of unrest; not seldom to our prejudices, sometimes to our fears, often to our egoism—but always to our credulity. And their words are heard with reverence, for their concern is with weighty matters; with the cultivation of our minds and the proper care of our bodies: with the attainment of our ambitions: with the perfection of the means and the glorification of our precious aims.

“It is otherwise with the artist.

“Confronted by the same enigmatical spectacle the artist descends within himself, and in that lonely region of stress and strife, if he be deserving and fortunate, he finds the terms of his appeal. His appeal is made to our less obvious capacities: to that part of our nature which, because of the warlike conditions of existence, is necessarily kept out of sight within the more resisting and hard qualities—like the vulnerable body within a steel armour. His appeal is less loud, more profound, less distinct, more stirring—and sooner forgotten. Yet its effect endures forever. The changing wisdom of successive generations discards ideas, questions facts, demolishes theories. But the artist appeals to that part of our being which is not dependent on wisdom; to that in us which is a gift and not an acquisition—and, therefore, more permanently enduring. He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives: to our sense of pity, and beauty, and pain: to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation—and to the subtle but in-

## Preface

vincible, conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn. . . .

"To arrest, for the space of a breath, the hands busy about the work of the earth, and compel men entranced by the sight of distant goals to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision of form and color, of sunshine and shadows; to make them pause for a look, for a sigh, for a smile—such is the aim, difficult and evanescent, and reserved only for a very few to achieve. But sometimes, by the deserving and the fortunate, even that task is accomplished—behold!—all the truth of life is there: a moment of vision, a sigh, a smile—and the return to an eternal rest."



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# THE TRIAL FOR MURDER

BY

CHARLES DICKENS

I HAVE always noticed a prevalent want of courage, even among persons of superior intelligence and culture, as to imparting their own psychological experiences when those have been of a strange sort. Almost all men are afraid that what they could relate in such wise would find no parallel or response in a listener's internal life, and might be suspected or laughed at. A truthful traveller, who should have seen some extraordinary creature in the likeness of a sea-serpent, would have no fear of mentioning it; but the same traveller, having had some singular presentiment, impulse, vagary of thought, vision (so-called), dream or other remarkable mental impression, would hesitate considerably before he would own to it. To this reticence I attribute much of the obscurity in which such subjects are involved. We do not habitually communicate our experiences of these subjective things as we do our experiences of objective creation. The consequence is, that the general stock of experience in this regard appears exceptional, and really is so, in respect of being miserably imperfect.

## Masterpieces of Fiction

In what I am going to relate I have no intention of setting up, opposing, or supporting any theory whatever. I know the history of the bookseller of Berlin, I have studied the case of the wife of a late astronomer royal as related by Sir David Brewster, and I have followed the minutest details of a much more remarkable case of spectral illusion occurring within my private circle of friends. It may be necessary to state as to this last, that the sufferer (a lady) was in no degree, however distant, related to me. A mistaken assumption on that head might suggest an explanation of a part of my own case—but only a part—which would be wholly without foundation. It cannot be referred to my inheritance of any developed peculiarity, nor had I ever before any at all similar experience, nor have I ever had any at all similar experience since.

It does not signify how many years ago, or how few, a certain murder was committed in England, which attracted great attention. We hear more than enough of murderers as they rise in succession to their atrocious eminence, and I would bury the memory of this particular brute, if I could, as his body was buried, in Newgate Jail. I purposely abstain from giving any direct clew to the criminal's individuality.

When the murder was first discovered, no suspicion fell—or I ought rather to say, for I cannot be too precise in my facts, it was nowhere publicly hinted that any suspicion fell—on the

## Trial for Murder

man who was afterward brought to trial. As no reference was at that time made to him in the newspapers, it is obviously impossible that any description of him can at that time have been given in the newspapers. It is essential that this fact be remembered.

Unfolding at breakfast my morning paper, containing the account of that first discovery, I found it to be deeply interesting, and I read it with close attention. I read it twice, if not three times. The discovery had been made in a bedroom, and, when I laid down the paper, I was aware of a flash—rush—flow—I do not know what to call it—no word I can find is satisfactorily descriptive—in which I seemed to see that bedroom passing through my room, like a picture impossibly painted on a running river. Though almost instantaneous in its passing, it was perfectly clear, so clear that I distinctly, and with a sense of relief, observed the absence of the dead body from the bed.

It was in no romantic place that I had this curious sensation, but in chambers in Piccadilly, very near to the corner of St. James's Street. It was entirely new to me. I was in my easy-chair at the moment, and the sensation was accompanied with a peculiar shiver which started the chair from its position. (But it is to be noted that the chair ran easily on castors.) I went to one of the windows (there are two in the room, and the room is on the second floor) to refresh my eyes with the moving

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objects down in Piccadilly. It was a bright autumn morning, and the street was sparkling and cheerful. The wind was high. As I looked out, it brought down from the Park a quantity of fallen leaves, which a gust took, and whirled into a spiral pillar. As the pillar fell and the leaves dispersed I saw two men on the opposite side of the way, going from west to east. They were one behind the other. The foremost man often looked back over his shoulder. The second man followed him, at a distance of some thirty paces, with his right hand menacingly raised. First, the singularity and steadiness of this threatening gesture in so public a thoroughfare attracted my attention; and next, the more remarkable circumstance that nobody heeded it. Both men threaded their way among the other passengers with a smoothness hardly consistent even with the action of walking on a pavement; and no single creature, that I could see, gave them place, touched them, or looked after them. In passing before my windows, they both stared up at me. I saw their two faces very distinctly, and I knew that I could recognize them anywhere. Not that I had consciously noticed anything very remarkable in either face, except that the man who went first had an unusually lowering appearance, and that the face of the man who followed him was of the colour of impure wax.

I am a bachelor, and my valet and his wife constitute my whole establishment. My occupa-

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tion is in a certain branch bank, and I wish that my duties as head of a department were as light as they are popularly supposed to be. They kept me in town that autumn, when I stood in need of change. I was not ill, but I was not well. My reader is to make the most that can be reasonably made of my feeling jaded, having a depressing sense upon me of a monotonous life, and being "slightly dyspeptic." I am assured by my renowned doctor that my real state of health at that time justifies no stronger description, and I quote his own from his written answer to my request for it.

As the circumstances of the murder, gradually unravelling, took stronger and stronger possession of the public mind, I kept them away from mine by knowing as little about them as was possible in the midst of the universal excitement. But I knew that a verdict of wilful murder had been found against the suspected murderer, and that he had been committed to Newgate for trial. I also knew that his trial had been postponed over one sessions of the Central Criminal Court, on the ground of general prejudice and want of time for the preparation of the defence. I may further have known, but I believe I did not, when, or about when, the sessions to which his trial stood postponed would come on.

My sitting-room, bedroom, and dressing-room are all on one floor. With the last there is no communication but through the bedroom. True, there is a door in it, once communicating

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with the staircase, but a part of the fitting of my bath has been—and had then been for some years—fixed across it. At the same period, and as a part of the same arrangement, the door had been nailed up and canvased over.

I was standing in my bedroom late one night giving some directions to my servant before he went to bed. My face was toward the only available door of communication with the dressing-room, and it was closed. My servant's back was toward that door. While I was speaking to him, I saw it open, and a man look in, who very earnestly and mysteriously beckoned to me. That man was the man who had gone second of the two along Piccadilly, and whose face was of the colour of impure wax.

The figure, having beckoned, drew back, and closed the door. With no longer pause than was made by my crossing the bedroom, I opened the dressing-room door, and looked in. I had a lighted candle already in my hand. I felt no inward expectation of seeing the figure in the dressing-room, and I did not see it there.

Conscious that my servant stood amazed, I turned round to him, and said, "Derrick, could you believe that in my cool senses I fancied I saw a—" As I there laid my hand upon his breast, with a sudden start he trembled violently, and said, "Oh, Lord, yes, sir! A dead man beckoning!"

Now I do not believe that this John Derrick,

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my trusty and attached servant for more than twenty years, had any impression whatever of having seen any such figure, until I touched him. The change in him was so startling, when I touched him, that I fully believe he derived his impression in some occult manner from me at that instant.

I bade John Derrick bring some brandy, and I gave him a dram, and was glad to take one myself. Of what had preceded that night's phenomenon I told him not a single word. Reflecting on it, I was absolutely certain that I had never seen that face before, except on the one occasion in Piccadilly. Comparing its expression when beckoning at the door with its expression when it had stared up at me as I stood at my window, I came to the conclusion that on the first occasion it had sought to fasten itself upon my memory, and that on the second occasion it had made sure of being immediately remembered.

I was not very comfortable that night, though I felt a certainty, difficult to explain, that the figure would not return. At daylight I fell into a heavy sleep, from which I was awakened by John Derrick's coming to my bedside with a paper in his hand.

This paper, it appeared, had been the subject of an altercation at the door between its bearer and my servant. It was a summons to me to serve upon a jury at the forthcoming sessions of the central criminal court at the Old Bailey.

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I had never before been summoned on such a jury, as John Derrick well knew. He believed—I am not certain at this hour whether with reason or otherwise—that that class of jurors were customarily chosen on a lower qualification than mine, and he had at first refused to accept the summons. The man who served it had taken the matter very coolly. He had said that my attendance or non-attendance was nothing to him; there the summons was, and I should deal with it at my own peril, and not at his.

For a day or two I was undecided whether to respond to this call, or take no notice of it. I was not conscious of the slightest mysterious bias, influence, or attraction, one way or other. Of that I am as strictly sure as of every other statement that I make here. Ultimately I decided, as a break in the monotony of my life, that I would go.

The appointed morning was a raw morning in the month of November. There was a dense brown fog in Piccadilly, and it became positively black and in the last degree oppressive east of Temple Bar. I found the passages and staircases of the Court-House flaringly lighted with gas, and the Court itself similarly illuminated. I think that, until I was conducted by officers into the Old Court and saw its crowded state, I did not know that the murderer was to be tried that day. I think that, until I was so helped into the Old Court with considerable difficulty, I did not know into which of the two

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courts sitting my summons would take me. But this must not be received as a positive assertion, for I am not completely satisfied in my mind on either point.

I took my seat in the place appropriated to jurors in waiting, and I looked about the court as well as I could through the cloud of fog and breath that was heavy in it. I noticed the black vapour hanging like a murky curtain outside the great windows, and I noticed the stifled sound of wheels on the straw or tan that was littered in the street; also, the hum of the people gathered there, which a shrill whistle, or a louder song or hail than the rest, occasionally pierced. Soon afterward the judges, two in number, entered, and took their seats. The buzz in the court was awfully hushed. The direction was given to put the murderer to the bar. He appeared there. And in that same instant I recognised in him the first of the two men who had gone down Piccadilly.

If my name had been called then I doubt if I could have answered to it audibly; but it was called about sixth or eighth in the panel, and I was by that time able to say, "Here!"

Now, observe. As I stepped into the box, the prisoner, who had been looking on attentively, but with no sign of concern, became violently agitated, and beckoned to his attorney. The prisoner's wish to challenge me was so manifest that it occasioned a pause, during which the attorney, with his hand upon the dock, whispered

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with his client, and shook his head. I afterward had it from that gentleman, that the prisoner's first affrighted words to him were, "*At all hazards, challenge that man!*" But, as he would give no reason for it, and admitted that he had not even known my name until he heard it called and I appeared, it was not done.

Both on the ground already explained, that I wish to avoid reviving the unwholesome memory of that murderer, and also because a detailed account of his long trial is by no means indispensable to my narrative, I shall confine myself closely to such incidents in the ten days and nights during which we, the jury, were kept together, as directly bear on my own curious personal experience. It is in that, and not in the murderer, that I seek to interest my reader. It is to that, and not to a page of the Newgate Calendar, that I beg attention.

I was chosen foreman of the jury. On the second morning of the trial, after evidence had been taken for two hours (I heard the church clocks strike), happening to cast my eyes over my brother jurymen, I found an inexplicable difficulty in counting them. I counted them several times, yet always with the same difficulty. In short, I made them one too many.

I touched the brother jurymen whose place was next me, and I whispered to him, "Oblige me by counting us." He looked surprised by the request, but turned his head and counted.

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"Why," says he, suddenly, "we are thirt—  
But no, it's not possible. No. We are twelve."

According to my counting that day, we were always right in detail, but in the gross we were always one too many. There was no appearance—no figure—to account for it, but I had now an inward foreshadowing of the figure that was surely coming.

The jury were housed at the London Tavern. We all slept in one large room on separate tables, and we were constantly in the charge and under the eye of the officer sworn to hold us in safe-keeping. I see no reason for suppressing the real name of that officer. He was intelligent, highly polite, and obliging, and (I was glad to hear) much respected in the city. He had an agreeable presence, good-eyes, enviable black whiskers, and a fine sonorous voice. His name was Mr. Harker.

When we turned into our twelve beds at night, Mr. Harker's bed was drawn across the door. On the night of the second day, not being disposed to lie down, and seeing Mr. Harker sitting on his bed, I went and sat beside him, and offered him a pinch of snuff. As Mr. Harker's hand touched mine in taking it from my box, a peculiar shiver crossed him, and he said, "Who is this?"

Following Mr. Harker's eyes, and looking along the room, I saw again the figure I expected—the second of the two men who had gone down Piccadilly. I rose and advanced a

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few steps, then stopped, and looked round at Mr. Harker. He was quite unconcerned, laughed, and said, in a pleasant way, "I thought for a moment we had a thirteenth juryman, without a bed. But I see it is the moonlight."

Making no revelation to Mr. Harker, but inviting him to take a walk with me to the end of the room, I watched what the figure did. It stood for a few moments by the bedside of each of my eleven brother jurymen, close to the pillow. It always went to the right-hand side of the bed, and always passed out crossing the foot of the next bed. It seemed, from the action of the head, merely to look down pensively at each recumbent figure. It took no notice of me, or of my bed, which was that nearest to Mr. Harker's. It seemed to go out where the moonlight came in, through a high window, as by an aerial flight of stairs.

Next morning at breakfast, it appeared that everybody present had dreamed of the murdered man last night, except myself and Mr. Harker.

I now felt as convinced that the second man who had gone down Piccadilly was the murdered man (so to speak), as if it had been borne into my comprehension by his immediate testimony. But even this took place, and in a manner for which I was not at all prepared.

On the fifth day of the trial, when the case for the prosecution was drawing to a close, a miniature of the murdered man, missing from his bedroom upon the discovery of the deed, and

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afterward found in a hiding-place where the murderer had been seen digging, was put in evidence. Having been identified by the witness under examination, it was handed up to the bench, and thence handed down to be inspected by the jury. As an officer in a black gown was making his way with it across to me, the figure of the second man who had gone down Piccadilly impetuously started from the crowd, caught the miniature from the officer, and gave it to me with his own hands, at the same time saying, in a low and hollow tone—before I saw the miniature, which was in a locket—“*I was younger then, and my face was not then drained of blood.*”

It also came between me and the brother jurymen to whom I would have given the miniature, and between him and the brother jurymen to whom he would have given it, and so passed it on through the whole of our number, and back into my possession. Not one of them, however, detected this.

At table, and generally when we were shut up together in Mr. Harker’s custody, we had from the first naturally discussed the day’s proceedings a good deal. On that fifth day, the case for the prosecution being closed, and we having that side of the question in a completed shape before us, our discussion was more animated and serious. Among our number was a vestryman—the densest idiot I have ever seen at large—who met the plainest evidence with

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the most preposterous objections, and who was sided with by two flabby parochial parasites —all the three impanelled from a district so delivered over to fever that they ought to have been upon their own trial for five hundred murders. When these mischievous blockheads were at their loudest, which was toward midnight, while some of us were already preparing for bed, I again saw the murdered man. He stood grimly behind them, beckoning to me. On my going toward them, and striking into the conversation, he immediately retired. This was the beginning of a separate series of appearances, confined to that long room in which *we* were confined. Whenever a knot of my brother jurymen laid their heads together, I saw the head of the murdered man among theirs. Whenever their comparison of notes was going against him, he would solemnly and irresistibly beckon to me.

It will be borne in mind that down to the production of the miniature, on the fifth day of the trial, I had never seen the appearance in court. Three changes occurred now that we entered on the case for the defence. Two of them I will mention together, first. The figure was now in court continually, and it never there addressed itself to me, but always to the person who was speaking at the time. For instance: the throat of the murdered man had been cut straight across. In the opening speech for the defence, it was suggested that

## Trial for Murder

the deceased might have cut his own throat. At that very moment, the figure, with its throat in the dreadful condition referred to (this it had concealed before), stood at the speaker's elbow, motioning across and across its windpipe, now with the right hand, now with the left, vigorously suggesting to the speaker himself the impossibility of such a wound having been self-inflicted by either hand. For another instance: a witness to character, a woman, deposed to the prisoner's being the most amiable of mankind. The figure at that instant stood on the floor before her, looking her full in the face, and pointing out the prisoner's evil countenance with an extended arm and an outstretched finger.

The third change now to be added impressed me strongly as the most marked and striking of all. I do not theorise upon it; I accurately state it, and there leave it. Although the appearance was not itself perceived by those whom it addressed, its coming close to such persons was invariably attended by some trepidation or disturbance on their part. It seemed to me as if it were prevented, by laws to which I was not amenable, from fully revealing itself to others, and yet as if it could invisibly, dumbly, and darkly overshadow their minds. When the leading counsel for the defence suggested that hypothesis of suicide, and the figure stood at the learned gentleman's elbow, frightfully sawing at its severed throat, it is undeniable that the counsel faltered in his

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speech, lost for a few seconds the thread of his ingenious discourse, wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, and turned extremely pale. When the witness to character was confronted by the appearance, her eyes most certainly did follow the direction of its pointed finger, and rest in great hesitation and trouble upon the prisoner's face. Two additional illustrations will suffice. On the eighth day of the trial, after the pause which was every day made early in the afternoon for a few minutes' rest and refreshment, I came back into court with the rest of the jury some little time before the return of the judges. Standing up in the box and looking about me, I thought the figure was not there, until, chancing to raise my eyes to the gallery, I saw it bending forward, and leaning over a very decent woman, as if to assure itself whether the judges had resumed their seats or not. Immediately afterward that woman screamed, fainted, and was carried out. So with the venerable, sagacious, and patient judge who conducted the trial. When the case was over, and he settled himself and his papers to sum up, the murdered man, entering by the judges' door, advanced to his Lordship's desk, and looked eagerly over his shoulder at the pages of his notes which he was turning. A change came over his Lordship's face; his hand stopped; the peculiar shiver that I knew so well passed over him; he faltered, 'Excuse me, gentlemen, for a few moments. I am somewhat oppressed

## Trial for Murder

by the vitiated air." And he did not recover until he had drunk a glass of water.

Through all the monotony of six of those interminable ten days—the same judges and others on the bench, the same murderer in the dock, the same lawyers at the table, the same tones of question and answer rising to the roof of the court, the same scratching of the judge's pen, the same ushers going in and out, the same lights kindled at the same hour when there had been any natural light of day, the same foggy curtain outside the great windows when it was foggy, the same rain pattering and dripping when it was rainy, the same foot-marks of turnkeys and prisoner day after day on the same sawdust, the same keys locking and unlocking the same heavy doors—through all the wearisome monotony which made me feel as if I had been foreman of the jury for a vast period of time, and Piccadilly had flourished coevally with Babylon, the murdered man never lost one trace of his distinctness in my eyes, nor was he at any moment less distinct than anybody else. I must not omit, as a matter of fact, that I never once saw the appearance which I call by the name of the murdered man look at the murderer. Again and again I wondered, "Why does he not?" But he never did.

Nor did he look at me, after the production of the miniature, until the last closing minutes of the trial arrived. We retired to consider, at

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seven minutes before ten at night. The idiotic vestryman and his two parochial parasites gave us so much trouble that we twice returned into court to beg to have certain extracts from the judge's notes re-read. Nine of us had not the smallest doubt about those passages, neither, I believe, had anyone in the court. The dunder-headed triumvirate, however, having no idea but obstruction, disputed them for that very reason. At length we prevailed, and finally the jury returned into court at ten minutes past twelve.

The murdered man at that time stood directly opposite the jury-box, on the other side of the court. As I took my place, his eyes rested on me with great attention. He seemed satisfied, and slowly shook a great gray veil, which he carried on his arm for the first time, over his head and whole form. As I gave in our verdict, "Guilty," the veil collapsed, all was gone, and his place was empty.

The murderer, being asked by the judge, according to usage, whether he had anything to say before sentence of death should be passed upon him, indistinctly muttered something which was described in the leading newspapers of the following day as "a few rambling, incoherent, and half-audible words, in which he was understood to complain that he had not had a fair trial, because the foreman of the jury was prepossessed against him." The remarkable declaration that he really made was

## Trial for Murder

this: "My Lord, I knew I was a doomed man when the foreman of my jury came into the box. My Lord, I knew he would never let me off, because, before I was taken, he somehow got to my bedside in the night, woke me, and put a rope round my neck."

## DENNIS HAGGARTY'S WIFE

BY

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

THERE was an odious Irishwoman and her daughter who used to frequent the "Royal Hotel" at Leamington some years ago, and who went by the name of Mrs. Major Gam. Gam had been a distinguished officer in his Majesty's service, whom nothing but death and his own amiable wife could overcome. The widow mourned her husband in the most becoming bombazine she could muster, and had at least half an inch of lampblack round the immense visiting-tickets which she left at the houses of the nobility and gentry her friends.

Some of us, I am sorry to say, used to call her Mrs. Major Gammon; for, if the worthy widow had a propensity, it was to talk largely of herself and family (of her own family, for she held her husband's very cheap), and of the wonders of her paternal mansion, Molloyville, county of Mayo. She was of the Molloys of that county; and though I never heard of the family before, I have little doubt, from what Mrs. Major Gam stated, that they were the most ancient and illustrious family of that part of Ireland. I remember there came down to see his aunt a

## Dennis Haggarty's Wife

young fellow with huge red whiskers and tight nankeens, a green coat, and an awful breastpin, who, after two days' stay at the Spa, proposed marriage to Miss S——, or, in default, a duel with her father; and who drove a flash curricle with a bay and a grey, and who was presented with much pride by Mrs. Gam as Castlereagh Molloy of Molloyville. We all agreed that he was the most insufferable snob of the whole season, and were delighted when a bailiff came down in search of him.

Well, this is all I know personally of the Molloyville family; but at the house, if you met the Widow Gam, and talked on any subject in life, you were sure to hear of it. If you asked her to have pease at dinner, she would say, "Oh, sir, after the pease at Molloyville, I really don't care for any others—do I, dearest Jemima? We always had a dish in the month of June, when my father gave his head gardener a guinea,—we had three at Molloyville—and sent him with his compliments and a quart of pease to our neighbour, dear Lord Marrowfat. What a sweet place Marrowfat Park is! Isn't it, Jemima?" If a carriage passed by the window, Mrs. Major Gammon would be sure to tell you that there were three carriages at Molloyville—"the barouche, the chawiot, and the covered cyar." In the same manner she would favour you with the number and names of the footmen of the establishment; and on a visit to Warwick Castle (for this bustling woman made one in every party of

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pleasure that was formed from the hotel), she gave us to understand that the great walk by the river was altogether inferior to the principal avenue of Molloyville Park. I should not have been able to tell so much about Mrs. Gam and her daughter, but that, between ourselves, I was particularly sweet upon a young lady at the time whose papa lived at the "Royal," and was under the care of Dr. Jephson.

The Jemima appealed to by Mrs. Gam in the above sentence was, of course, her daughter, apostrophised by her mother, "Jemima, my soul's darling!" or, "Jemima, my blessed child!" or, "Jemima, my own love!" The sacrifices that Mrs. Gam had made for that daughter were, she said, astonishing. The money she had spent in masters upon her, the illnesses through which she had nursed her, the ineffable love the mother bore her, were only known to Heaven, Mrs. Gam said. They used to come into the room with their arms round each other's waists; at dinner, between the courses, the mother would sit with one hand locked in her daughter's; and if only two or three young men were present at the time, would be pretty sure to kiss her Jemima more than once during the time whilst the bohea was poured out.

As for Miss Gam, if she was not handsome, candour forbids me to say she was ugly. She was neither one nor t'other. She was a person who wore ringlets and a band round her forehead; she knew four songs, which became rather tedious

## Dennis Haggarty's Wife

at the end of a couple of months' acquaintance; she had excessively bare shoulders; she inclined to wear numbers of cheap ornaments, rings, brooches, *ferronières*, smelling-bottles, and was always, we thought, very smartly dressed: though old Mrs. Lynx hinted that her gowns and her mother's were turned over and over again, and that her eyes were almost put out by darning stockings.

These eyes Miss Gam had very large, though rather red and weak, and used to roll them about at every eligible unmarried man in the place. But though the widow subscribed to all the balls; though she hired a fly to go to the meet of the hounds; though she was constant at church, and Jemima sang louder than any person there except the clerk; and though, probably, any person who made her a happy husband would be invited down to enjoy the three footmen, gardeners, and carriages at Molloyville, yet no English gentleman was found sufficiently audacious to propose. Old Lynx used to say that the pair had been at Tunbridge, Harrogate, Brighton, Ramsgate, Cheltenham, for this eight years past; where they had met, it seemed, with no better fortune. Indeed, the widow looked rather high for her blessed child; and as she looked with the contempt which no small number of Irish people feel upon all persons who get their bread by labour or commerce, or as she was a person whose energetic manners, costume, and brogue were not much to the taste of quiet English coun-

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try gentlemen, Jemima—sweet, spotless flower—still remained on her hands, a thought withered, perhaps, and seedy.

Now at this time the 120th Regiment was quartered at Weedon Barracks, and with the corps was a certain Assistant-Surgeon Haggarty, a large, lean, tough, raw-boned man, with big hands, knock-knees, and caroty whiskers, and, withal, as honest a creature as ever handled a lancet. Haggarty, as his name imports, was of the very same nation as Mrs. Gam; and, what is more, the honest fellow had some of the peculiarities which belonged to the widow, and bragged about his family almost as much as she did. I do not know of what particular part of Ireland they were kings, but monarchs they must have been, as have been the ancestors of so many thousand Hibernian families; but they had been men of no small consideration in Dublin, "where my father," Haggarty said, "is as well known as King William's statue, and where he 'rowls his carriage, too,' let me tell ye."

Hence, Haggarty was called by the wags "Rowl the carriage," and several of them made inquiries of Mrs. Gam regarding him. "Mrs. Gam, when you used to go up from Molloyville to the Lord Lieutenant's balls, and had your town-house in Fitzwilliam Square, used you to meet the famous Doctor Haggarty in society?"

"Is it Surgeon Haggarty of Gloucester Street ye mean? The black Papist! D'ye suppose

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that the Molloys would sit down to table with a creature of that sort?"

"Why, isn't he the most famous physician in Dublin, and doesn't he rowl his carriage there?"

"The horrid wretch! He keeps a shop, I tell ye, and sends his sons out with the medicine. He's got four of them off into the army—Ulick and Phil, and Terence and Denny; and now it's Charles that takes out the physic. But how should I know about these odious creatures? Their mother was a Burke, of Burke's Town, county Cavan, and brought Surgeon Haggarty two thousand pounds. She was a Protestant, and I am surprised how she could have taken up with a horrid, odious, Popish apothecary!"

From the extent of the widow's information, I am led to suppose that the inhabitants of Dublin are not less anxious about their neighbours than are the natives of English cities; and I think it is very probable that Mrs. Gam's account of the young Haggartys who carried out the medicine is perfectly correct, for a lad in the 120th made a caricature of Haggarty coming out of a chemist's shop with an oil-cloth basket under his arm, which set the worthy surgeon in such a fury that there would have been a duel between him and the ensign could the fiery doctor have had his way.

Now Dionysius Haggarty was of an exceedingly inflammable temperament, and it chanced that of all the invalids, the visitors, the young squires of Warwickshire, the young manufactur-

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ers from Birmingham, the young officers from the barracks—it chanced, unluckily for Miss Gam and himself, that he was the only individual who was in the least smitten by her personal charms. He was very tender and modest about his love, however; for it must be owned that he respected Mrs. Gam hugely, and fully admitted, like a good simple fellow as he was, the superiority of that lady's birth and breeding to his own. How could he hope that he, a humble assistant surgeon, with a thousand pounds his aunt Kitty left him for all his fortune—how could he hope that one of the race of Molloyville would ever condescend to marry him?

Inflamed, however, by love, and inspired by wine, one day, at a picnic at Kenilworth, Haggarty, whose loves and raptures were the talk of the whole regiment, was induced by his waggish comrades to make a proposal in form.

"Are you aware, Mr. Haggarty, that you are speaking to a Molloy?" was all the reply majestic Mrs. Gam made when, according to the usual formula, the fluttering Jemima referred her suitor to "mamma." She left him with a look which was meant to crush the poor fellow to earth; she gathered up her cloak and bonnet, and precipitately called for her fly. She took care to tell every single soul in Leamington that the son of the odious Papist apothecary had had the audacity to propose for her daughter (indeed, a proposal, coming from whatever quarter it may,

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does no harm), and left Haggarty in a state of extreme depression and despair.

His downheartedness, indeed, surprised most of his acquaintances in and out of the regiment; for the young lady was no beauty, and a doubtful fortune, and Dennis was a man outwardly of an unromantic turn, who seemed to have a great deal more liking for beefsteak and whisky-punch than for women, however fascinating.

But there is no doubt this shy, uncouth, rough fellow had a warmer and more faithful heart hid within him than many a dandy who is as handsome as Apollo. I, for my part, never can understand why a man falls in love, and heartily give him credit for so doing, never mind with what or whom. *That* I take to be a point quite as much beyond an individual's own control as the catching of the small-pox or the colour of his hair. To the surprise of all, Assistant-Surgeon Dionysius Haggarty was deeply and seriously in love; and I am told that one day he very nearly killed the before-mentioned young ensign with a carving-knife for venturing to make a second caricature representing Lady Gammon and Jemima in a fantastical park, surrounded by three gardeners, three carriages, three footmen, and the covered cyar. He would have no joking concerning them. He became moody and quarrelsome of habit. He was for some time much more in the surgery and hospital than in the mess. He gave up the eating, for the most part, of those vast quantities of beef and pudding for which his stomach

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had used to afford such ample and swift accommodation; and when the cloth was drawn, instead of taking twelve tumblers, and singing Irish melodies as he used to do in a horrible cracked, yelling voice, he would retire to his own apartment, or gloomily pace the barrack-yard, or madly whip and spur a grey mare he had on the road to Leamington, where his Jemima (although invisible for him) still dwelt.

The season at Leamington coming to a conclusion by the withdrawal of the young fellows who frequented that watering-place, the Widow Gam retired to her usual quarters for the other months of the year. Where these quarters were, I think we have no right to ask; for I believe she had quarrelled with her brother at Molloyville, and, besides, was a great deal too proud to be a burden on anybody.

Not only did the widow quit Leamington, but very soon afterward the 120th received its marching orders, and left Weedon and Warwickshire. Haggarty's appetite was by this time partially restored; but his love was not altered, and his humour was still morose and gloomy. I am informed that at this period of his life he wrote some poems relative to his unhappy passion—a wild set of verses of several lengths, and in his handwriting, being discovered upon a sheet of paper in which a pitch-plaster was wrapped up, which Lieutenant and Adjutant Wheezer was compelled to put on for a cold.

Fancy, then, three years afterward, the sur-

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prise of all Haggarty's acquaintances on reading in the public papers the following announcement:

"Married, at Monkstown, on the 12th instant, Dionysius Haggarty, Esq., of H.M. 120th Foot, to Jemima Amelia Wilhelmina Molloy, daughter of the late Major Lancelot Gam, R.M., and granddaughter of the late, and niece of the present, Burke Bodkin Blake Molloy, Esq., Molloyville, county Mayo."

"Has the course of true love at last begun to run smooth?" thought I, as I laid down the paper, and the old times, and the old leering, bragging widow, and the high shoulders of her daughter, and the jolly days with the 120th, and Dr. Jephson's one-horse chaise, and the Warwickshire hunt, and—and Louisa S——, but never mind *her*—came back to my mind. "Has that good-natured, simple fellow at last met with his reward? Well, if he has not to marry the mother-in-law, too, he may get on well enough."

Another year announced the retirement of Assistant-Surgeon Haggarty from the 120th, where he was replaced by Assistant-Surgeon Angus Rothsay Leech, a Scotchman, probably, with whom I have not the least acquaintance, and who has nothing whatever to do with this little history.

Still more years passed on, during which time I will not say that I kept a constant watch upon

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the fortunes of Mr. Haggarty and his lady; for, perhaps, if the truth were known, I never thought for a moment about them, until one day, being at Kingstown, near Dublin, dawdling on the beach and staring at the Hill of Howth, as most people at that watering-place do, I saw coming toward me a tall, gaunt man, with a pair of bushy red whiskers, of which I thought I had seen the like in former years, and a face which could be no other than Haggarty's. It was Haggarty, ten years older than when we last met, and greatly more grim and thin. He had on one shoulder a young gentleman in a dirty tartan costume, and a face exceedingly like his own peeping from under a battered plume of black feathers, while with his other hand he was dragging a light-green go-cart, in which reposed a female infant of some two years old. Both were roaring with great power of lungs.

As soon as Dennis saw me his face lost the dull, puzzled expression which had seemed to characterise it. He dropped the pole of the go-cart from one hand and his son from the other, and came jumping forward to greet me with all his might, leaving his progeny roaring in the road.

"Bless my sowl," says he, "sure it's Fitz-Boodle! Fitz, don't you remember me? Dennis Haggarty of the 120th? Leamington, you know?—Molloy, my boy, hould your tongue and stop your screeching, and Jemima's, too; d'ye hear?—Well, it does good to sore eyes to see an



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old face. How fat you're grown, Fitz; and were ye ever in Ireland before? And a'n't ye delighted with it? Confess, now, isn't it beautiful?"

This question regarding the merits of their country, which I have remarked is put by most Irish persons, being answered in a satisfactory manner, and the shouts of the infants appeased from an apple-stall hard by, Dennis and I talked of old times; and I congratulated him on his marriage with the lovely girl whom we all admired, and hoped he had a fortune with her, and so forth. His appearance, however, did not bespeak a great fortune. He had an old grey hat, short old trousers, an old waistcoat with regimental buttons, and patched Blucher boots, such as are not usually sported by persons in easy life.

"Ah!" says he, with a sigh, in reply to my queries, "times are changed since them days, Fitz-Boodle. My wife's not what she was—the beautiful creature you knew her.—Molloy, my boy, run off in a hurry to your mamma, and tell her an English gentleman is coming home to dine—for you'll dine with me, Fitz, in course?" And I agreed to partake of that meal, though Master Molloy altogether declined to obey his papa's orders with respect to announcing the stranger.

"Well, I must announce you myself," says Haggarty, with a smile. "Come, it's just dinner-time, and my little cottage is not a hundred yards off." Accordingly, we all marched in procession to Dennis's little cottage, which was one of a row

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and a half of one-storied houses, with little court-yards before them, and mostly with very fine names on the door-posts of each. "Surgeon Haggarty" was emblazoned on Dennis's gate, on a stained green copper-plate; and, not content with this, on the door-post above the bell was an oval with the inscription of "New Molloyville." The bell was broken, of course; the court, or garden path, was mouldy, weedy, seedy; there were some dirty rocks, by way of ornament, round a faded grass-plot in the centre; some clothes and rags hanging out of most part of the windows of New Molloyville, the immediate entrance to which was by a battered scraper, under a broken trellis-work, up which a withered creeper declined any longer to climb.

"Small, but snug," says Haggarty. "I'll lead the way, Fitz. Put your hat on the flower-pot there, and turn to the left into the drawing-room." A fog of onions and turf-smoke filled the whole of the house, and gave signs that dinner was not far off. Far off? You could hear it frizzling in the kitchen, where the maid was also endeavouring to hush the crying of a third refractory child. But as we entered, all three of Haggarty's darlings were in full war.

"Is it you, Dennis?" cried a sharp, raw voice from a dark corner in the drawing-room to which we were introduced, and in which a dirty table-cloth was laid for dinner, some bottles of porter and a cold mutton-bone being laid out on a rickety grand piano hard by. "Ye're always

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late, Mr. Haggarty. Have you brought the whisky from Nowlan's? I'll go bail ye've not now."

"My dear, I've brought an old friend of yours and mine to take pot-luck with us to-day," said Dennis.

"When is he to come?" said the lady. At which speech I was rather surprised, for I stood before her.

"Here he is, Jemima, my love," answered Dennis, looking at me. "Mr. Fitz-Boodle; don't you remember him in Warwickshire, darling?"

"Mr. Fitz-Boodle! I am very glad to see him," said the lady, rising and curtseying with much cordiality.

Mrs. Haggarty was blind!

Mrs. Haggarty was not only blind, but it was evident that small-pox had been the cause of her loss of vision. Her eyes were bound with a bandage, her features were entirely swollen, scarred, and distorted by the horrible effects of the malady. She had been knitting in a corner when we entered, and was wrapped in a very dirty bedgown. Her voice to me was quite different to that in which she addressed her husband. She spoke to Haggarty in broad Irish: she addressed me in that most odious of all languages—Irish-English—endeavouring to the utmost to disguise her brogue, and to speak with the true dawdling *distingué* English air.

"Are you long in I-a-land?" said the poor creature in this accent. "You must faind it a

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sad ba'ba'ous place, Mr. Fitz-Boodle, I'm shu-ah! It was vary kaind of you to come upon us *en famille*, and accept a dinner *sans cérémonie*—Mr. Haggarty, I hope you'll put the waine into aice; Mr. Fitz-Boodle must be melted with this hot weathah."

For some time she conducted the conversation in this polite strain, and I was obliged to say, in reply to a query of hers, that I did not find her the least altered, though I should never have recognised her but for this *rencontre*. She told Haggarty with a significant air to get the wine from the cellah, and whispered to me that he was his own butlah; and the poor fellow, taking the hint, scuddled away into the town for a pound of veal cutlets and a couple of bottles of wine from the tavern.

"Will the childhren get their potatoes and butter here?" said a barefoot girl, with long black hair flowing over her face, which she thrust in at the door.

"Let them sup in the nursery, Elizabeth, and send—ah! Edwards to me."

"Is it cook you mane, ma'am?" said the girl.

"Send her at once!" shrieked the unfortunate woman; and the noise of frying presently ceasing, a hot woman made her appearance, wiping her brows with her apron, and asking, with an accent decidedly Hibernian, what the mishtress wanted.

"Lead me up to my dressing-room, Edwards; I really am not fit to be seen in this dishabille by Mr. Fitz-Boodle."

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"Fait', I can't!" says Edwards. "Sure the masther's out at the butcher's, and can't look to the kitchen fire!"

"Nonsense, I must go!" cried Mrs. Haggarty; and so Edwards, putting on a resigned air, and giving her arm and face a further rub with her apron, held out her arm to Mrs. Dennis, and the pair went upstairs.

She left me to indulge my reflections for half an hour, at the end of which period she came downstairs dressed in an old yellow satin, with the poor shoulders exposed just as much as ever. She had mounted a tawdry cap, which Haggarty himself must have selected for her. She had all sorts of necklaces, bracelets, and earrings in gold, in garnets, in mother-of-pearl, in ormolu. She brought in a furious savour of musk, which drove the odours of onions and turf-smoke before it; and she waved across her wretched, angular, mean, scarred features an old cambric handkerchief with a yellow lace border.

"And so you would have known me anywhere, Mr. Fitz-Boodle?" said she, with a grin that was meant to be most fascinating. "I was sure you would; for though my dreadful illness deprived me of my sight, it is a mercy that it did not change my features or complexion at all!"

This mortification had been spared the unhappy woman; but I don't know whether, with all her vanity, her infernal pride, folly, and selfishness, it was charitable to leave her in her error.

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Yet why correct her? There is a quality in certain people which is above all advice, exposure, or correction. Only let a man or woman have DULLNESS sufficient, and they need bow to no extant authority. A dullard recognises no betters; a dullard can't see that he is in the wrong; a dullard has no scruples of conscience, no doubts of pleasing, or succeeding, or doing right—no qualms for other people's feelings, no respect but for the fool himself. How can you make a fool perceive that he is a fool? Such a personage can no more see his own folly than he can see his own ears. And the great quality of dullness is to be unalterably contented with itself. What myriads of souls are there of this admirable sort—selfish, stingy, ignorant, passionate, brutal; bad sons, mothers, fathers, never known to do kind actions!

To pause, however, in this disquisition which was carrying us far off Kingstown, New Molloyville, Ireland—nay, into the wide world wherever Dullness inhabits—let it be stated that Mrs. Haggarty, from my brief acquaintance with her and her mother, was of the order of persons just mentioned. There was an air of conscious merit about her, very hard to swallow along with the infamous dinner poor Dennis managed, after much delay, to get on the table. She did not fail to invite me to Molloyville, where she said her cousin would be charmed to see me; and she told me almost as many anecdotes about that place as her mother used to impart in former

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days. I observed, moreover, that Dennis cut her the favourite pieces of the beefsteak, that she ate thereof with great gusto, and that she drank with similar eagerness of the various strong liquors at table. "We Irish ladies are all fond of a leetle glass of punch," she said, with a playful air; and Dennis mixed her a powerful tumbler of such violent grog as I myself could swallow only with some difficulty. She talked of her suffering a great deal, of her sacrifices, of the luxuries to which she had been accustomed before marriage—in a word, of a hundred of those themes on which some ladies are in the custom of enlarging when they wish to plague some husbands.

But honest Dennis, far from being angry at this perpetual, wearisome, impudent recurrence to her own superiority, rather encouraged the conversation than otherwise. It pleased him to hear his wife discourse about her merits and family splendours. He was so thoroughly beaten down and henpecked that he, as it were, gloried in his servitude, and fancied that his wife's magnificence reflected credit on himself. He looked toward me, who was half sick of the woman and her egotism, as if expecting me to exhibit the deepest sympathy, and flung me glances across the table as much as to say, "What a gifted creature my Jemima is, and what a fine fellow I am to be in possession of her!" When the children came down she scolded them, of course, and dismissed them abruptly (for which circumstance,

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perhaps, the writer of these pages was not in his heart very sorry); and, after having sat a preposterously long time, left us, asking whether we would have coffee there or in her boudoir.

"Oh! here, of course," said Dennis, with rather a troubled air; and in about ten minutes the lovely creature was led back to us again by "Edwards," and the coffee made its appearance. After coffee her husband begged her to let Mr. Fitz-Boodle hear her voice. "He longs for some of his old favourites."

"No! *do* you?" said she, and was led in triumph to the jingling old piano, and with a screechy, wiry voice sung those very abominable old ditties which I had heard her sing at Leamington ten years back.

Haggarty, as she sang, flung himself back in his chair delighted. Husbands always are, and with the same song—one that they have heard when they were nineteen years old, probably: most Englishmen's tunes have that date, and it is rather affecting, I think, to hear an old gentleman of sixty or seventy quavering the old ditty that was fresh when *he* was fresh and in his prime. If he has a musical wife, depend on it he thinks her old songs of 1788 are better than any he has heard since—in fact, he has heard *none* since. When the old couple are in high good-humour, the old gentleman will take the old lady round the waist, and say, "My dear, do sing me one of your own songs"; and she sits down and sings with her old voice, and, as ~~she~~

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sings, the roses of her youth bloom again for a moment. Ranelagh resuscitates, and she is dancing a minuet in powder and a train.

This is another digression. It was occasioned by looking at poor Dennis's face while his wife was screeching (and, believe me, the former was the most pleasant occupation). Bottom tickled by the fairies could not have been in greater ecstasies. He thought the music was divine; and had further reason for exulting in it, which was, that his wife was always in a good humour after singing, and never would sing but in that happy frame of mind. Dennis had hinted so much in our little colloquy during the ten minutes of his lady's absence in the "boudoir"; so, at the conclusion of each piece, we shouted "Bravo!" and clapped our hands like mad.

Such was my insight into the life of Surgeon Dionysius Haggarty and his wife; and I must have come upon him at a favourable moment, too, for poor Dennis has spoken subsequently of our delightful evening at Kingstown, and evidently thinks to this day that his friend was fascinated by the entertainment there. His inward economy was as follows: he had his half-pay, a thousand pounds, about a hundred a year that his father left, and his wife had sixty pounds a year from the mother—which the mother, of course, never paid. He had no practice, for he was absorbed in attention to his Jemima and the children, whom he used to wash, to dress, to carry out, to walk, or to give a ride, as we

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have seen, and who could not have a servant, as their dear blind mother could never be left alone. Mrs. Haggarty, a great invalid, used to lie in bed till one, and have breakfast and hot luncheon there. A fifth part of his income was spent in having her wheeled about in a chair, by which it was his duty to walk daily for an allotted number of hours. Dinner would ensue, and the amateur clergy, who abound in Ireland, and of whom Mrs. Haggarty was a great admirer, lauded her everywhere as a model of resignation and virtue, and praised beyond measure the admirable piety with which she bore her sufferings.

Well, every man to his taste. It did not certainly appear to me that *she* was the martyr of the family.

"The circumstances of my marriage with Jemima," Dennis said to me in some after conversations we had on this interesting subject, "were the most romantic and touching you can conceive. You saw what an impression the dear girl had made upon me when we were at Weedon; for from the first day I set eyes on her, and heard her sing her delightful song of 'Dark-eyed Maiden of Araby,' I felt, and said to Turniquet of ours that very night, that *she* was the dark-eyed maid of Araby for *me*—not that *she* was, you know, for she was born in Shropshire. But I felt that I had seen the woman who was to make me happy or miserable for life. You know how I proposed for her at Kenilworth,

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and how I was rejected, and how I almost shot myself in consequence—no, you don't know that, for I said nothing about it to any one; but I can tell you it was a very near thing, and a very lucky thing for me I didn't do it, for—would you believe it?—the dear girl was in love with me all the time."

"Was she really?" said I, who recollect that Miss Gam's love of those days showed itself in a very singular manner; but the fact is, when women are most in love they most disguise it.

"Over head and ears in love with poor Dennis," resumed that worthy fellow, "who'd ever have thought it? But I have it from the best authority, from her own mother, with whom I'm not over and above good friends now; but of this fact she assured me, and I'll tell you when and how.

"We were quartered at Cork three years after we were at Weedon, and it was our last year at home; and a great mercy that my dear girl spoke in time, or where should we have been *now?* Well, one day, marching home from parade, I saw a lady seated at an open window by another who seemed an invalid; and the lady at the window, who was dressed in the profoundest mourning, cried out with a scream, 'Gracious Heavens! it's Mr. Haggarty of the 120th.'

"'Sure I know that voice,' says I to Whiskerton.

"'It's a great mercy you don't know it a deal

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'too well,' says he; 'it's Lady Gammon. She's on some husband-hunting scheme, depend on it, for that daughter of hers. She was at Bath last year on the same errand, and at Cheltenham the year before, where, Heaven bless you! she's as well known as the Hen and Chickens.'

"I'll thank you not to speak disrespectfully of Miss Jemima Gam," said I to Whiskerton; 'she's of one of the first families in Ireland, and whoever says a word against a woman I once proposed for, insults me — do you understand?'

"Well, marry her, if you like," says Whiskerton, quite peevish; 'marry her, and be hanged!'

"Marry her! The very idea of it set my brain a-whirling, and made me a thousand times more mad than I am by nature.

"You may be sure I walked up the hill to the parade-ground that afternoon, and with a beating heart, too. I came to the widow's house. It was called 'New Molloyville,' as this is. Wherever she takes a house for six months, she calls it 'New Molloyville'; and has had one in Mallow, in Bandon, in Sligo, in Castlebar, in Fermoy, in Droguedha, and the deuce knows where besides. But the blinds were down, and though I thought I saw somebody behind 'em, no notice was taken of poor Denny Haggarty, and I paced up and down all messtime in hopes of catching a glimpse of Jemima, but in vain. The next day I was on the ground again; I was just as much in love as ever, that's the fact. I'd

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never been in that way before, look you; and when once caught, I knew it was for life.

"There's no use in telling you how long I beat about the bush, but when I did get admittance to the house—it was through the means of young Castlereagh Molloy, whom you may remember at Leamington, and who was at Cork for the regatta, and used to dine at our mess, and had taken a mighty fancy to me—when I did get into the house, I say, I rushed *in medias res* at once. I couldn't keep myself quiet; my heart was too full.

"Oh, Fitz! I shall never forget the day—the moment I was inthrojuiced into the dthrawing-room." (As he began to be agitated, Dennis's brogue broke out with greater richness than ever; but though a stranger may catch, and repeat from memory, a few words, it is next to impossible for him to *keep up a conversation in Irish*, so that we had best give up all attempts to imitate Dennis.) "When I saw old Mother Gam," said he, "my feelings overcame me all at once. I rowled down on the ground, sir, as if I'd been hit by a musket-ball. 'Dearest madam,' says I, 'I'll die if you don't give me Jemima.'

"'Heavens, Mr. Haggarty!' says she, 'how you seize me with surprise!—Castlereagh, my dear nephew, had you not better leave us?' And away he went, lighting a cigar, and leaving me still on the floor.

"'Rise, Mr. Haggarty,' continued the widow.

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'I will not attempt to deny that this constancy toward my daughter is extremely affecting, however sudden your present appeal may be. I will not attempt to deny that, perhaps, Jemima may have a similar feeling; but, as I said, I never could give my daughter to a Catholic.'

"'I'm as good a Protestant as yourself, ma'am,' says I; 'my mother was an heiress, and we were all brought up her way.'

"'That makes the matter very different,' says she, turning up the whites of her eyes. 'How could I ever have reconciled it to my conscience to see my blessed child married to a Papist? How could I ever have taken him to Molloyville? Well, this obstacle being removed, *I* must put myself no longer in the way between two young people. *I* must sacrifice myself, as I always have when my darling girl was in question. You shall see her, the poor dear, lovely, gentle sufferer, and learn your fate from her own lips.'

"'The sufferer, ma'am,' says I; 'has Miss Gam been ill?'

"'What! haven't you heard?' cried the widow. 'Haven't you heard of the dreadful illness which so nearly carried her from me? For nine weeks, Mr. Haggarty, I watched her day and night without taking a wink of sleep—for nine weeks she lay trembling between death and life; and I paid the doctor eighty-three guineas. She is restored now, but she is the wreck of the beautiful creature she was. Suffering, and, perhaps,

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*another disappointment*—but we won't mention that *now*—have so pulled her down. But I will leave you, and prepare my sweet girl for this strange, this entirely unexpected visit.'

"I won't tell you what took place between me and Jemima, to whom I was introduced as she sat in the darkened room, poor sufferer! nor describe to you with what a thrill of joy I seized (after groping about for it) her poor, emaciated hand. She did not withdraw it; I came out of that room an engaged man, sir; and *now* I was enabled to show her that I had always loved her sincerely, for there was my will made three years back in her favour—that night she refused me, as I told ye. I would have shot myself, but they'd have brought me in *non compos*, and my brother Mick would have contested the will; and so I determined to live, in order that she might benefit by my dying. I had but a thousand pounds then; since that my father has left me two more. I willed every shilling to her, as you may fancy, and settled it upon her when we married, as we did soon after. It was not for some time that I was allowed to see the poor girl's face, or indeed was aware of the horrid loss she had sustained. Fancy my agony, my dear fellow, when I saw that beautiful wreck!"

There was something not a little affecting to think, in the conduct of this brave fellow, that he never once, as he told his story, seemed to allude to the possibility of his declining to

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marry a woman who was not the same as the woman he loved, but that he was quite as faithful to her now as he had been when captivated by the poor, tawdry charms of the silly Miss of Leamington. It was hard that such a noble heart as this should be flung away upon yonder foul mass of greedy vanity. Was it hard, or not, that he should remain deceived in his obstinate humility, and continue to admire the selfish, silly being whom he had chosen to worship?

"I should have been appointed surgeon of the regiment," continued Dennis, "soon after, when it was ordered abroad to Jamaica, where it now is. But my wife would not hear of going, and said she would break her heart if she left her mother. So I retired on half-pay, and took this cottage; and in case any practice should fall in my way—why, there is my name on the brass plate, and I'm ready for anything that comes. But the only case that ever *did* come was one day when I was driving my wife in the chaise; and another, one night, of a beggar with a broken head. My wife makes me a present of a baby every year, and we've no debts; and between you and me and the post, as long as my mother-in-law is out of the house, I'm as happy as I need be."

"What! you and the old lady don't get on well?" said I.

"I can't say we do; it's not in nature, you know," said Dennis, with a faint grin. "She

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comes into the house and turns it topsy-turvy. When she's here, I'm obliged to sleep in the scullery. She's never paid her daughter's income since the first year, though she brags about her sacrifices as if she had ruined herself for Jemima; and besides, when she's here, there's a whole clan of the Molloys, horse, foot, and dragoons, that are quartered upon us, and eat me out of house and home."

"And is Molloyville such a fine place as the widow described it?" asked I, laughing, and not a little curious.

"Oh, a mighty fine place entirely!" said Dennis. "There's the oak park of two hundred acres, the finest land ye ever saw, only they've cut all the wood down. The garden in the old Molloy's time, they say, was the finest ever seen in the west of Ireland; but they've taken all the glass to mend the house windows: and small blame to them either. There's a clear rent-roll of three and fifty hundred a year, only it's in the hand of receivers; besides other debts, on which there is no land security."

"Your cousin-in-law, Castlereagh Molloy, won't come into a large fortune?"

"Oh, he'll do very well," said Dennis. "As long as he can get credit, he's not the fellow to stint himself. Faith, I was fool enough to put my name to a bit of paper for him, and as they could not catch him in Mayo, they laid hold of me at Kingstown here. And there was a pretty to-do. Didn't Mrs. Gam say I was ruining her

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family, that's all! I paid it by instalments, for all my money is settled on Jemima; and Castlereagh, who's an honourable fellow, offered me any satisfaction in life. Anyhow, he couldn't do more than *that*."

"Of course not; and now you're friends?"

"Yes, and he and his aunt have had a tiff, too; and he abuses her properly, I warrant ye. He says that she carried about Jemima from place to place, and flung her at the head of every unmarried man in England a'most—my poor Jemima, and she all the while dying in love with me! As soon as she got over the small-pox—she took it at Fermoy: God bless her! I wish I'd been by to be her nurse-tender—as soon as she was rid of it, the old lady said to Castlereagh, 'Castlereagh, go to the bar'cks, and find out in the Army List where the 120th is.' Off she came to Cork hot-foot. It appears that while she was ill, Jemima's love for me showed itself in such a violent way that her mother was overcome, and promised that, should the dear child recover, she would try and bring us together. Castlereagh says she would have gone after us to Jamaica."

"I have no doubt she would," said I.

"Could you have a stronger proof of love than that?" cried Dennis. "My dear girl's illness and frightful blindness have, of course, injured her health and her temper. She cannot in her position look to the children, you know, and so they come under my charge for the most

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part; and her temper is unequal, certainly. But you see what a sensitive, refined, elegant creature she is, and may fancy that she's often put out by a rough fellow like me."

Here Dennis left me, saying it was time to go and walk out the children; and I think his story has matter of some wholesome reflection in it for bachelors who are about to change their condition, or may console some who are mourning their celibacy. Marry, gentlemen, if you like; leave your comfortable dinner at the club for cold mutton and curl-papers at your home; give up your books or pleasures, and take to yourselves wives and children; but think well on what you do first, as I have no doubt you will after this advice and example. Advice is always useful in matters of love; men always take it; they always follow other people's opinions, not their own; they always profit by example. When they see a pretty woman, and feel the delicious madness of love coming over them, they always stop to calculate her temper, her money, their own money, or suitableness for the married life.

. . . Ha, ha, ha! Let us fool in this way no more. I have been in love forty-three times with all ranks and conditions of women, and would have married every time if they would have let me. How many wives had King Solomon, the wisest of men? And is not that story a warning to us that Love is master of the wisest? It is only fools who defy him.

I must come, however, to the last, and perhaps

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the saddest, part of poor Denny Haggarty's history. I met him once more, and in such a condition as made me determine to write this history.

In the month of June last I happened to be at Richmond, a delightful little place of retreat; and there, sunning himself upon the terrace, was my old friend of the 120th. He looked older, thinner, poorer, and more wretched than I had ever seen him. "What! you have given up Kingstown?" said I, shaking him by the hand.

"Yes," says he.

"And is my lady and your family here at Richmond?"

"No," says he, with a sad shake of the head, and the poor fellow's hollow eyes filled with tears.

"Good Heavens, Denny! what's the matter?" said I. He was squeezing my hand like a vice as I spoke.

"They've LEFT me!" he burst out with a dreadful shout of passionate grief—a horrible scream which seemed to be wrenched out of his heart. "Left me!" said he, sinking down on a seat, and clenching his great fist, and shaking his lean arms wildly. "I'm a wise man now, Mr. Fitz-Boodle. Jemima has gone away from me; and yet you know how I loved her, and how happy we were! I've got nobody now; but I'll die soon, that's one comfort, and to think it's she that'll kill me after all!"

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The story, which he told me with a wild and furious lamentation such as is not known among men of our cooler country, and such as I don't like now to recall, was a very simple one. The mother-in-law had taken possession of the house, and had driven him from it. His property at his marriage was settled on his wife. She had never loved him, and told him this secret at last, and drove him out of doors with her selfish scorn and ill-temper. The boy had died; the girls were better, he said, brought up among the Molloys than they could be with him; and so he was quite alone in the world, and was living, or rather dying, on forty pounds a year.

His troubles are very likely over by this time. The two fools who caused his misery will never read this history of him—they never read godless stories in magazines; and I wish, honest reader, that you and I went to church as much as they do. These people are not wicked *because* of their religious observances, but *in spite* of them. They are too dull to understand humility, too blind to see a tender and simple heart under a rough, ungainly bosom. They are sure that all their conduct toward my poor friend here has been perfectly righteous, and that they have given proofs of the most Christian virtue. Haggarty's wife is considered by her friends as a martyr to a savage husband, and her mother is the angel that has come to rescue her. All they did was to cheat him and desert him. And safe in that wonderful self-compla-

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cency with which the fools of this earth are endowed, they have not a single pang of conscience for their villainy toward him, and consider their heartlessness as a proof and consequence of their spotless piety and virtue.

# THE DEATH OF OLIVIER BÉCAILLE

BY  
ÉMILE ZOLA

## I

IT was on a Saturday, at six o'clock in the morning, that I died, after three days' illness. My poor wife was bending over a trunk in which she kept her linen. When she rose and saw I was rigid, with eyes wide open, and had ceased to breathe, she ran to me, thinking that I had fainted. She felt my hands and face, and then, suddenly seized with terror, fell to sobbing:

"My God, my God! He is dead!"

I heard everything, but the sounds were faint, and seemed to come from afar. With my left eye I could perceive a confused light, in which objects were blurred and indistinct; my right eye seemed to be completely paralysed. A syncope of my entire being, with the suddenness of a stroke of lightning, had made me powerless. My will was dead; not a fibre of my nerves obeyed me. Only within my impotent, inert frame thought remained, slow and languid, but perfectly clear.

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My poor Marguerite wept on her knees beside the bed, repeating brokenly:

"He is dead! My God! He is dead!"

Could this really be death, this curious state of torpor, this flesh stricken to rigidity, while the mind kept on working? Was this my soul, waiting a little in my brain before taking its flight? I had been subject to nervous attacks since childhood. Twice, while still young, a sharp fever had almost carried me off. They had become used to seeing me delicate and sickly; and I had myself forbidden Marguerite to send for a physician, when I had gone to bed on the morning of our arrival in Paris, in this little hotel in the Rue Dauphine. It was merely the fatigue of the journey which had exhausted my strength, and a little rest would soon set me up again. Nevertheless, I had felt myself in the grasp of dread anxiety. We had left our little country town in very straitened circumstances, having scarcely enough money to last until I should receive my first month's salary from the firm which had promised me a position. And now a sudden attack had stricken me down!

Could this then be death? I had imagined a night more dark, a silence more heavy. Even as a little child I was afraid of death. As I was delicate and people petted me pityingly, I came to believe that I should not live long and that I should be buried at an early age. And this thought of the earth filled me with a horror

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that I could never accustom myself to, although it haunted me night and day. This fixed idea remained with me as I grew older. Sometimes, after days of reflection, I believed that I had overcome my fear. Oh, well! one dies, and that is the end; every one must die some day; nothing could be a more convenient or better arrangement. I became almost light-hearted; I looked death in the face. Then a sudden chill would freeze me, and I would grow dizzy, as if some giant hand had held me over a gloomy pit. It was the thought of the earth that had returned to me and swept away my reasoning. How many times, in the middle of the night, have I not jumped up in bed, my slumbers disturbed by some strange, poisonous breath, clasping my hands in despair and sobbing, "My God! my God! I must die!" My blood froze with fear; the necessity of death seemed to me even more abominable in the confused condition of my senses at the abrupt awakening. It was only with difficulty that I was able to go to sleep again; even sleep itself alarmed me, so much did it resemble death. What if I should sleep forever! What if I closed my eyes never to open them again!

I know not if others have suffered from this agony. For me it has poisoned existence. Death has stood between me and everything I have loved. I remember the happiest moments spent with Marguerite. During the first months of our marriage, when she slept at my side,

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when I built up, thinking of her, dreams of the future, the fear of a last parting always entered in, to embitter my joy and destroy my hopes. We must part—it might be to-morrow, it might be within the hour. Despair fell upon me like a heavy weight; I asked myself what was the use of our mutual happiness, since it inevitably led to so cruel an end. Then my imagination would travel still farther. Who would be taken first—she or I? And either alternative brought the tears to my eyes as I unrolled the picture of our broken lives. Thus, during the happiest times of my existence, I have been attacked by sudden fits of melancholy which would be understood by no one. When good luck befell me my friends were astonished to see me gloomy. It was the thought of my annihilation which had suddenly crossed my joy. The terrible "What is the use?" sounded on my ears like a knell.

But the worst of this torment is that one endures it like some secret shame. One dare not tell of it. It often happens that both husband and wife, lying side by side, shudder at the same foreboding, after the light has been extinguished; yet neither speaks, because one does not speak of death any more than one would mention an obscene word. One fears it to the point of not naming it; one hides it as one hides one's sex.

While I pondered upon these things, my dear Marguerite went on sobbing, and it was hard for me to lie there, unable to calm her grief by telling her that I was not in pain. If death was

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nothing more than this swoon of the flesh, I surely was wrong in fearing it so much. It was a state of selfish comfort and repose, from which cares were absent. My memory especially had assumed an extraordinary activity. My entire life passed rapidly before me, as though I were present at some spectacle which I had not seen before. It was a strange and curious sensation, and amused me much. It might have been some faint voice reciting my history.

There was a little country corner, near Guerande, on the road to Piriac, which entered my recollection. At the bend of the road a grove of pines hangs over a rocky slope. When I was seven years old I went there with my father, and in a tumble-down house ate pancakes with Marguerite's family—poor folk who led a hand-to-mouth existence selling fish. Then I recalled the school at Nantes, where I had grown up, between tiresome old walls, perpetually irritated by a desire for the sweeping horizon of Guerande, with the marshes stretching out from the lower town as far as the eye could reach, and the broad sea sparkling under the sky. Then came a black spot: my father died, I engaged with the management of a hospital as a servant, and began a monotonous existence, whose only excuse was my Sunday visits to the old house on the road to Piriac. Matters went from bad to worse, the fish brought almost nothing, and the country-side became poverty-stricken. Marguerite was no more than a child.

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She liked me because I took her riding in a wheelbarrow. But later, when I asked her to marry me, I understood, from her frightened gesture, that she looked upon the idea with horror. Her parents had given their consent immediately; it would be a relief to them. She, submissive, did not say no. When she grew accustomed to the idea of being my wife she did not seem to be much displeased. On the day of our wedding, at Guerande, I remember that it rained in torrents, and, when we returned, that she went about in petticoats, because her dress had become soaked.

That is all my youth. We lived down there for some time. But one day, when I reached home, I found my wife in tears. She was tired of it and wished to go away. By the end of six months I had saved a little money, chiefly from the proceeds of extra work; and, as an old friend of my family had promised to find me a position in Paris, I took my dear little girl there, in order that she might weep no more. In the train she laughed. When night came, the seats of the third-class carriages being very hard, I took her upon my knees so that she might sleep comfortably.

But that was all past. Now, at this hour, I had just died on this meagre lodging-house bed, while my wife lay weeping on her knees before it. The white patch I perceived with my left eye paled little by little, but I clearly recalled the appearance of the room. To the left was the

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wash-stand; to the right, the mantelpiece, in the centre of which a long, silent clock gave out the time as ten minutes past ten. The window opened on the Rue Dauphine, black and profound. All Paris passed by there, and such was the din that I heard the panes of glass rattle in their frames.

We knew no one in Paris. As we had hastened our departure, I was not expected until the following Monday at the offices of the firm. It was a strange sensation to feel one's self imprisoned in this room, still bewildered and confused by the fifteen-hours' railway journey and the noise of the Paris streets. My wife had attended to me with smiling gentleness, but I felt that she was alarmed. From time to time she went to the window and looked out into the street; then she returned quite pale, frightened by that vast Paris of which she knew not a single stone and which thundered so terribly. What was she to do if she could not awaken me? What would become of her in this immense city, alone, without assistance, thrown upon her own resources?

Marguerite had taken one of my hands which hung, inert, over the edge of the bed. She kissed it passionately and cried out repeatedly: "Olivier, answer me! My God! he is dead! he is dead!"

Death was not unconsciousness, then, since I could hear and reason. It was non-existence that had terrified me since my childhood. I imagined the disappearance of my being, the total destruction of what I was; and that for all

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time, through centuries and still centuries to come, with no possibility of rebirth. Sometimes, when I found in a newspaper a date relating to the next century, I shuddered: I should certainly not be alive at that date; the thought of a year of the future that I should not see and in which I should be no more, filled me with anguish. Was I not the world, and would it not all crumble when I departed?

To dream of life in death—such had always been my hope. But this certainly could not be death. I should surely awaken presently. Yes, presently I should lean over and take Marguerite in my arms. What joy it would be to speak to each other again! And how much stronger would be our love! I would take two more days' rest and then I would go to my office. A new life would begin for us—a happier life and a wider. However, I was in no hurry. Just at the moment I was too weak. Marguerite was wrong to give way to such despair, but I lacked the strength to turn my head on the pillow and smile at her. Presently, when she came to me again, I would murmur very low, so as not to frighten her, while I kissed her cheek:

"I am only sleeping, dear child. Don't you see that I am alive, and that I love you?"

### II

AT the cries which escaped from Marguerite's lips, the door was suddenly opened, and a voice said:

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"Why, what's the matter, neighbour? Another attack?"

I recognised the voice. It was that of an old woman, a Madame Gabin, who lived on the same floor as ourselves. Evidently sympathising with our lonely position, she had shown herself very obliging to us.

"My God! Is it the end?" she asked, lowering her voice.

I felt that she was approaching. She looked at me, touched me, then murmured gently:

"My poor child! My poor child!"

Marguerite, overcome, wept unceasingly. Mme. Gabin lifted her up and seated her in the wooden armchair near the mantelpiece, where she tried to console her.

"Come, you will get ill. You need not give way to despair just because your husband is gone. Certainly, when I lost Gabin, I felt like you do now; I went for three whole days without swallowing so much as a pinch of food. But that did no good; on the contrary, it only made matters worse. Come, for Heaven's sake, be sensible."

Little by little, Marguerite quieted down. Her strength was all gone; but now and again a fit of sobbing still shook her. In the meantime, the old woman took possession of the room, saying with rough kindness.

"Don't bother about anything. Neighbours must help one another. I see that your trunks are not yet quite unpacked, but there is liner in the chest of drawers, is there not?"

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I heard her open a drawer. She must have taken out a napkin and spread it on the table. Then she struck a match, which made me think that she was going to light one of the candles on the mantelpiece to place near my head. I followed all her movements in the room, taking note of her slightest actions.

"The poor gentleman!" she murmured. "How fortunate that I heard you crying, my dear."

Suddenly the misty light that I could still observe with my left eye disappeared. Mme. Gabin had just closed my eyes. I had not felt the touch of her finger on my eyelids. When at last I understood, a chill began to creep down my backbone.

But soon the door opened. Dédé, Mme. Gabin's ten-year-old daughter, entered, calling out in a shrill voice:

"Mama, mama! I knew you would be here. Here is your bill—three francs and four sous. I took twenty dozen blinds."

"Hush! hush! don't say any more!" vainly repeated the mother.

As the little girl went on, her mother pointed to the bed. Dédé stopped, and, evidently alarmed, retreated toward the door.

"Is the gentleman sleeping?" she asked in a low voice.

"Yes; run away and play," replied Mme. Gabin.

But the child would not go. She seemed to

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be looking at me with wide open eyes, startled and vaguely understanding. Suddenly she was seized with a mad fear, and overturned a chair in her haste to get out of the room.

"He is dead! Oh, mama, he is dead!"

Deep silence reigned. Marguerite, half-lying in the armchair, wept no longer. Mme. Gabin still busied herself about the room. She began to mutter between her teeth.

"Children know everything nowadays. Look at that one. God knows I have brought her up properly! When she goes on an errand I count the number of minutes she is away, in order to be sure she is getting into no mischief. But that makes no difference; she knows everything; she knew at once what the matter was. And yet she has seen only one corpse, her Uncle François, and at that time she was only four years old. Oh, well! what can you expect? There are no more children now!"

She interrupted herself, and passed without pause to another subject.

"You know, little one, we must think of the formalities, the declaration to the municipality, and all the details of the funeral. But you are in no condition to attend to that. And I don't want to leave you alone. If you don't mind, I will go and see if Monsieur Simoneau is at home."

Marguerite did not reply. I heard all this conversation as from a great distance. It seemed to me at times as though I were flying, like subtle flame, in the air of the room, while

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some stranger, a shapeless mass, rested inert on the bed. Nevertheless, I should have preferred Marguerite to decline the services of this Simoneau. I had seen him three of four times during my short illness. He occupied a near-by room, and had been very civil. Mme. Gabin had told us that he was in Paris merely temporarily, in order to collect some old debts of his father, who had just died in the provinces. He was a tall young man, handsome and strong. I detested him, probably because he always looked so well. He had visited us the evening before, and it had pained me to see him near Marguerite. She looked so pretty and so white at his side! And he had looked at her so fixedly, while she smiled at him, saying that he was very good to come so soon to ask after my health.

"Here is M. Simoneau," whispered Mme. Gabin, who returned.

He opened the door gently, and Marguerite, as soon as she saw him, again burst into tears. The sight of this friend, the only man she knew, opened her grief afresh. He did not try to console her. I could not see him; but in the shadows that surrounded me I made out his face, and I could perceive that he felt sorry at finding the poor woman in such despair. And how pretty she must have looked, with her loosened fair hair, her pale face, and her dear little childish hands burning with fever!

"I am entirely at your service, madame,"

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murmured Simoneau. "If you will only let me take charge of everything——"

Her reply was confused and broken. But as the young man went out, Mme. Gabin accompanied him, and I heard her speak of money as she passed me. It would cost a great deal, and she feared that the poor thing hadn't a penny. However, one might ask her. Simoneau prevailed upon the old woman to be silent. He did not wish to trouble Marguerite. He then went to the municipality to arrange about the funeral.

When silence set in again, I asked myself how long this nightmare was going to last. I knew I must be alive, since I was aware of every movement about me. And I began to take exact account of my condition. It was evidently one of those cases of epilepsy of which I had so often heard. Even when quite a young child, at the time of my nervous illness, I had had syncopes lasting several hours. It was evidently an attack of this nature that held me rigid as the dead, and which deceived every one about me. But my heart would soon beat again, the blood would once more circulate in my veins, and I should awake and console Marguerite. While reasoning thus, I bade myself have patience.

Hours passed. Mme. Gabin had brought my wife some breakfast. Marguerite refused to eat anything. Then the noon hour struck. From the open window I heard the noise of the traffic in the Rue Dauphine. A light clink of

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copper from the small table at the head of the bed apprized me that they were changing the candle. At last, Simoneau reappeared.

"Well?" ejaculated the old woman.

"Everything is settled," he replied. The funeral is for to-morrow at eleven o'clock. Don't be alarmed, and don't mention these things before that poor woman."

"The doctor for the dead has not been here yet," said Mme. Gabin.

Simoneau sat down near Marguerite, spoke a few encouraging words, and fell silent. The funeral was for the next day at eleven o'clock. The phrase reverberated in my brain like a knell. And this doctor who had not yet come—this doctor for the dead, as Mme. Gabin had called him—he would see in a moment that I was simply in a trance. He would do what was necessary to awaken me. I awaited him in frightful impatience. However, the day wore on. Mme. Gabin, in order not to waste her time, had finished her blinds. Furthermore, after having asked permission of Marguerite, she had brought back Dédé, because, as she said, she did not believe in leaving children long by themselves.

"Come in," she whispered, taking the little girl by the hand, "and don't be silly. Don't look toward that side of the room, or I shall be cross."

She forbade her to look at me, evidently thinking that the proper thing to do. Dédé probably

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gave a glance occasionally in my direction, for I heard her mother slap her on the arm, saying, angrily:

"Keep your eyes on your work, now, or I'll send you away, and to-night the gentleman will come and pinch your feet."

Both mother and daughter sat down at the table. The noise of their scissors cutting the blinds reached me distinctly. It was probably a delicate piece of work, for they did not seem to make much progress. I counted their strokes, one by one, to deaden my increasing anguish.

So the only sound in the room came from the cutting of these scissors. Marguerite, overmastered by weariness, was probably asleep. Simoneau rose. The abominable thought that he might profit by Marguerite's slumber to touch her hair with his lips tortured me. I did not know this man, and I felt that he loved my wife. A laugh from little Dédé increased my irritation.

"What are you laughing at, little fool?" asked her mother. "I will put you out into the street. Come, what is it that makes you laugh?"

The child stammered. She had not laughed; she had only coughed. As for me, I imagined that she had seen Simoneau bend over Marguerite and that the action had seemed funny to her.

The lamp had just been lighted when some one knocked.

"Ah, here is the doctor," said the old woman.

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It was, in fact, the doctor. He did not even excuse himself for being so late. Undoubtedly he had had many stairs to climb during the day. As the lamp lighted the room so feebly, he asked:

"The corpse is here?"

"Yes, sir," replied Simoneau.

Marguerite had risen, shivering. Mme. Gabin had sent Dédé out into the hall, for a child has no business to see such things; and she was trying to drag my wife toward the window, in order that she might be spared the sight. The doctor lost no time. I gathered that he was tired, impatient, and in a hurry. Did he touch my hand? Did he listen for my heart-beat? I do not know. But it seemed to me that he simply looked at me carelessly.

"Would you like me to hold the lamp for you?" suggested Simoneau obligingly.

"No; it is not necessary," said the doctor quietly.

What, unnecessary! This man had my life in his hands, and he considered it unnecessary to make a careful examination. But I was not dead! I wanted to cry out that I was not dead!

"Ah, at what time did he die?" he went on.

"At six o'clock this morning," replied Simoneau.

A furious revolt surged up within the terrible bonds which held me. Oh! the agony of being powerless to speak or move a muscle!

The doctor added:

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"This heavy weather is bad. Nothing is so enervating as the first days of spring."

And then he went away. It was my life that had gone. Cries, tears, imprecations stifled me, lacerated my convulsed throat, from which not a sound escaped. Ah! the despicable man, of whom routine had made a machine, and who visited a deathbed with no more thought than to fulfil a simple formality! Why, he knew nothing, this man! Of what use was all his science, if he could not tell at once the difference between life and death! And he went away—he went away!

"Good-night, sir," said Simoneau.

There was a silence. The doctor had bowed to Marguerite, who had returned, while Mme. Gabin closed the window. Then he left the room; I heard his footsteps descending the staircase.

So this was the end. I was condemned. My last hope had vanished with that man. If I did not awake before the next day at eleven o'clock I should be buried alive. And the thought was so frightful that I lost consciousness. It was like a swoon in death itself. The last sound that struck my ear was the metallic click of scissors. The death vigil commenced. No one spoke. Marguerite had refused to sleep in the next room. She was there, half recumbent in the armchair, with her beautiful face pallid, her eyes closed, with the lids bathed in tears, while Simoneau gazed at her silent in the shadows.

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## III

I NEVER could find words to describe the agony I felt during the morning of the next day. It has remained to me like a horrible dream, in which my emotions were so strange and so distressed that it would be difficult for me to chronicle them accurately. What made my torture the more frightful was that I hoped at every moment for a sudden awakening. And the nearer the hour of the funeral approached, the more acute became my anguish. It was not until the next morning that I again became conscious of my surroundings. A grating sound cut short my sleep. Mme. Gabin had opened the window. It was probably about seven o'clock, because I heard the call of pedlars in the street, the shrill voice of a boy selling chickweed, another, hoarser voice offering carrots for sale. This noisy awakening of Paris soothed me at first; it seemed impossible that I could be buried in the earth, in the middle of all this stir and animation. Moreover, my memory corrected me. I recalled having seen a case similar to mine when I was employed in the hospital at Guerande. A man there had been unconscious for twenty-four hours; his sleep was so deep that it puzzled the doctors. Then, suddenly, he sat up, and at once was able to go about his business. I had already been asleep twenty-five hours, but if I awoke before ten o'clock it would be time enough.

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I tried to find out the number of people in the room, and what they were doing. Little Dédé was evidently playing outside, for a childish laugh came in through the open door. Undoubtedly Simoneau had left; no sound that I could hear indicated his presence. Mme. Gabin's footsteps were the only evidences of life in the room. At last she spoke.

"My dear," said the old woman, "you should take it while it is hot. It will refresh you."

She addressed herself to Marguerite, and the tinkling noise of crockery on the mantelpiece apprised me that she was pouring out coffee.

"Yes, I needed that," she went on to say. "At my age, of course, it is nothing to sit up all night, but then it is so gloomy when there is misfortune in the house.- Take some coffee, my dear; just a drop."

And she forced Marguerite to drink a cup of it.

"Now, doesn't that refresh you? You will need strength to sustain you through the day. If you are wise, you will go into my room and wait there."

"No, I will stay here," replied Marguerite firmly.

Her voice, which I had not heard since the evening before, touched me. She was changed, broken with grief. Ah, the dear creature! I felt in her presence a last consolation. I knew that she never kept her eyes away from me, and that she was shedding for me the tears of her

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innermost heart. But the minutes passed. I heard, through the door, a noise that I could not at first understand. It sounded like the carrying in of some piece of furniture which knocked against the walls of the too narrow staircase. Then, on hearing the sobs of Marguerite break out afresh, I knew that it was the coffin.

"You have come too soon," said Mme. Gabin ill-humouredly. Put it behind the bed."

What time was it then? Nine o'clock, perhaps. So the coffin was already there. I could distinguish it in the heavy darkness, quite new, the wood still showing the marks of the planer's hands. My God! is everything going to end? Are they going to take me away in this box that lies at my feet?

There was left for me, however, one supreme joy. Marguerite, in spite of her weakness, desired to administer the last attentions to me. It was she who, helped by the old woman, dressed me with the tenderness of a sister and a wife. I felt that I was once again in her arms every time she passed a garment over me. She stopped, almost fainting under her strong emotion; she pressed me to her, bathing me with her tears. I would have returned her embrace, crying, "I live!" But I lay there powerless and remained stiff and stark.

"You are foolish to do that; it will all be lost," said Mme. Gabin.

Marguerite replied in a whisper.

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"Let me alone. I want to dress him in the best things we have."

I knew then that she was clothing me as if for my wedding day. I still kept those garments, which I counted on wearing in Paris on special occasions. Then she fell back in the armchair, exhausted by the effort she had just put forth.

Suddenly Simoneau spoke. Probably he had just come in.

"They are downstairs," he murmured.

"Good; it is not too soon," replied Mme. Gabin, also lowering her voice. Tell them to come up; we must finish all this."

The old woman seemed to reflect. She continued:

"Listen, M. Simoneau; you must take her by force into my room. I don't want her to stay here. You will be doing her a service. Meanwhile, the affair will be over in a twinkling."

The words struck me to the heart. And what were my thoughts as I heard the frightful struggle that commenced! Simoneau had approached Marguerite, begging her to leave the room.

"For pity's sake," he implored, "come with me; spare yourself these useless pangs."

"No, no," replied my wife; "I will stay. I wish to stay until the last moment. Consider that I have only him in the world, and that when he is gone I shall be alone."

However, I heard Mme. Gabin, who was near the bed, whisper in the ear of the young man:

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"Quick! take her away; carry her in your arms."

What, was Simoneau going to take Marguerite away like that! All at once she cried out. On a furious impulse, I would have jumped to my feet. But the springs of my being were broken; and I remained so rigid that I could scarcely even raise my eyelids to see what was going on in front of me. The struggle continued; my wife cowered among the furniture, crying:

"Oh! have mercy, have mercy, sir! Let me be! I don't want to go!"

He had evidently seized her with his strong arms, and she could utter only feeble remonstrances. He carried her out, the sobbing died away, and I almost imagined I could see them—he tall and robust, holding her against his breast, and she, exhausted, allowing herself to be carried wherever he wished to take her.

"Gracious! that was no child's play!" murmured Mme. Gabin. "Let us have it over, then, now that the coast is clear!"

In the jealous rage which consumed me, I looked upon this affair as an abominable abduction. I had not seen Marguerite since the day before, but I could still hear her voice; and now even that was at an end. They were about to take me away. A man had carried off my wife before I had even been put under the earth. And he was with her, behind the screen, consoling her, embracing her perhaps!

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The door opened, and heavy feet stamped into the room.

"Hurry, hurry," continued Mme. Gabin, "or the poor lady will be back before you have gone." She spoke to strangers, whose only replies were grunts.

"I am not a relative, you understand—only a neighbour. I am making nothing out of all this. It is from pure goodness of heart that I am mixing myself up with their affairs. And it is no great fun, either. Yes, yes, I spent the night here. It was not so warm at four o'clock in the morning, I can tell you. But I was always foolish in that way."

At that moment they pulled the coffin into the middle of the room, and I understood. I was doomed, then, since my awakening did not come. My thoughts lost their clearness, everything whirled about me in a black mist, and I felt such utter weariness that the loss of my reasoning powers was welcome to me.

"They didn't spare the wood," said the hoarse voice of one of the undertaker's assistants. "The coffin is too long."

"Oh, well! he will be all the more comfortable," added another jokingly.

I was not heavy, upon which fact they congratulated themselves, for they had three flights of stairs to descend. Just as they lifted me by the shoulders and the heels, I heard Mme. Gabin fly into a sudden rage.

"Little rascal!" she cried. "Shove your nose

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into everything, will you? Just wait until I get you alone."

It was Dédé, who had opened the door and was peering curiously through it. She wished to see them put the gentleman in the coffin. Two vigorous slaps resounded, followed by an explosion of sobs. And when the mother returned she talked about her daughter with the men who were arranging me in the coffin.

"She is ten years old. She is a good girl, you know, but very inquisitive. I don't often whip her, but she must obey."

"Oh!" said one of the men, "all children are like that. Whenever there is a corpse anywhere, they are always about."

I was placed comfortably enough, and I could have believed myself still in bed but for the pressure on my left arm, which was squeezed against the side of the coffin. It was as they said; I lay there at my ease, thanks to my slight build.

"Wait," cried Mme. Gabin, "I promised his wife to put a pillow under his head!"

But the men were in a hurry; they hurt me as they packed the pillow under me. One of them cursed because he could not find the hammer. They had left it below, and had to go down for it. The lid was put on, and I felt a shudder run through my whole body as two strokes of the hammer knocked in the first nail. It was all over; I had lived. Then the nails went in rapidly, one by one, while the hammer played its

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fugubrious accompaniment. They might have been packers nailing down a box of dried fruit from the cool way in which they went about it. Gradually the sounds became duller and more prolonged, resounding curiously, as if the wooden box had been transformed into a musical box. The last word that struck my ear in that room on the Rue Dauphine was a remark by Mme. Gabin:

"Be careful, now, and look out for the staircase on the second floor; it is shaky."

My sensations as they carried me out were those of a man being rolled about in a choppy sea. But from that moment my recollections became very indefinite. I remember, however, that the only thing that occupied my mind, a stupid and mechanical preoccupation, was to speculate on the route we should take to the cemetery. I did not know a single street in Paris, and was ignorant of the location of the principal cemeteries, the names of which I had occasionally heard. But that did not prevent me from concentrating the last efforts of my intellect on the question as to whether we were turning to the right or to the left. The hearse jolted me over the pavement. About me the rumbling of vehicles and the rustling of the people on the footwalks were modified by the coffinwood into a confused clamour. At first I followed the route with a good deal of clearness. Then there was a stop, and I was taken out. I understood that we were at the church. But when the

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hearse went on again I lost all perception of the streets through which we travelled. A chime of bells apprised me that we were passing a church; a softer and more continuous rumbling of wheels made me believe that we were driving down some promenade. I was like a condemned man being led to the gibbet, stupefied, awaiting the final blow which came not. They came to a stop, and took me out of the hearse; and there was a sudden silence. All the noises had ceased. I felt that I was in some deserted place, under trees, the wide heaven over my head. Several people seemed to be following the hearse; probably Simoncau and other guests of the house, for the sound of low talking reached me. A psalm was sung, and a priest murmured something in Latin. There were indefinite movements which lasted about two minutes. Then, suddenly, I felt that I was being lowered into the ground. Ropes scraped against the sides of the coffin, sounding like the strings of a double-bass viol. It was the end. A terrible shock, like the discharge of a cannon, reverberated over my head; a second shock, this time over my feet, convulsed me; another, so violent that I thought it would break the coffin, fell over my middle. And I fainted.

### IV

How long did I remain there? I could not say. An eternity and a second are of equal duration

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in oblivion. I was no more. Little by little, vaguely, the consciousness of being returned to me. I still slept, but I had begun to dream. A nightmare cut itself loose from the black canopy that covered my horizon. And this dream which I had was of the stuff that in my imagination had so often tortured me in my youth, at such times when, with a nature predisposed to horrible inventions, I almost enjoyed the atrocious pleasure of creating catastrophies for myself. I imagined that my wife awaited me somewhere—at Guerande, I think—and that I had taken the train to join her. As the train went through a tunnel, all at once there came a frightful crash, like a peal of thunder. Our train had not been injured, however, but the rock had caved in before and behind us, so that we found ourselves imprisoned in the centre of a mountain, the only outlets barred by great blocks of stone. Then began a period of frightful agony. There was no hope of relief; it would take a month to cut through the tunnel; the work, moreover, would require infinite precautions and extraordinarily powerful machinery. We were prisoners in a sort of cave without an entrance. Our death was merely a question of hours.

Often had my imagination played upon such a terrible fate. I used to vary the tragedy. Sometimes its actors were men, women, children, hundreds of people, a vast multitude which provided me with new episodes without end.

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There would be, perhaps, provisions in the train, which would soon be exhausted, and then the miserable prisoners would fight with each other for the last morsel of bread. An old man would moan with pain as they beat him to the ground; or a mother would fight like a tiger to defend the half-dozen mouthfuls she had kept for her child. In my coach a young married couple lay clasped in each other's arms; they had lost hope and made no further efforts. The passengers alighted from the train and ran about wildly, like beasts in search of prey. All classes mingled; a very wealthy man, a high official, some one said, wept on the neck of a workman. For some time the lamps had been extinguished, and even the fires of the locomotive had gone out. In walking, one had to keep hold of the train, in order to avoid knocking one's head. Nothing could be more weird and awful than this train, sealed under the rocks, as though buried alive, with its passengers dying one by one. I revelled in the horrors of even the smallest details. Shrieks pierced the shadows. All at once a man whom no one had noticed fell fainting against my shoulder. I was suffering from cold and lack of air. Almost suffocated, it seemed to me as if an avalanche were rolling over my chest, as if the whole mountain were weighing me and bearing me down. Suddenly a shout of joy went up. For a long time we had imagined that we heard a low muffled sound from the other side of the rock. But help had not arrived from

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that quarter. One of us had discovered a hole in the rock; and we hurried toward this hole, at the end of which we could perceive a blue spot as big as a man's hand. Oh, with what thankfulness we greeted that blue spot! It was the sky. We could distinguish the movements of black objects, undoubtedly workmen labouring for our deliverance. A wild shout leaped from every mouth: "Saved! Saved!" while trembling arms were lifted toward that little spot of pale blue.

It was the violence of this clamour that awoke me. Where was I? Still in the tunnel, undoubtedly. I found myself lying on my back, and I felt, at right and left, a hard substance which pressed my sides. I tried to raise myself, but severely bumped my head in the attempt. Did rocks enclose me on every side, then? And the blue spot had disappeared; the sky was no longer there, not even far away. I was gasping, and I ground my teeth with a shudder.

Suddenly I remembered. My hair stood on end with horror, and I felt the frightful truth run through me, from the feet to the head, like an icy current. Had I at last recovered from this syncope, which had confined me for many hours in the rigidity of a corpse? Yes, I could move, and I passed my hands along the boards of the coffin. One last proof remained to me: I opened my mouth and spoke, instinctively calling for Marguerite. I screamed, and my voice, reverberating in the pine box, sounded

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so awful that it terrified me. My God! was it true, then? I could talk, cry out that I lived, and my voice would not be heard! I was a helpless prisoner under the earth!

I made a supreme effort to calm myself and think. Was there no way of getting out? My dream recommenced, and my brain was still so muddled that my imagination confused the air-hole with its spot of blue sky with the grave wherein I lay gasping. With eyes wide open, I tried to pierce the gloom. Perhaps I should see a nail, a crack, a glimmer of light! But there was only an impenetrable cloak of blackness. Then my head suddenly became clear, and I realised that I must act at once if I wished to save my life. At first the greatest danger seemed to lie in the increasing probabilities of suffocation. I had, undoubtedly, been able to go for a long time without air, thanks to the syncope which temporarily suspended my functions; but now that my heart beat and my lungs renewed their duties, I should be asphyxiated if I could not very soon escape. I suffered also from cold, and feared to be overtaken by that fatal stupor which attacks men who are caught in the snow.

While all the time repeating to myself that I must be calm, I felt gusts of madness mount to my brain. I strove to recall the details of a burial. Had I not heard that at Paris burials were made at a depth of six feet? How would it be possible to pierce such an enormous mass

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of earth? Even if I could break the coffin, would not the earth run in, like fine sand, and fill my eyes and mouth? And that would still be death, an abominable death, drowned in dirt.

Nevertheless, I felt carefully about me. The coffin was large, and I could move my arms with ease. I could discover no crack in the wood. The planks, both to right and to left, were badly planed, but thick and tough. In passing my hand over the boards above my head, I discovered a knot in the wood, which gave way under pressure. Although I worked under great difficulties, I at last succeeded in shoving the knot through; and on the other side my finger met the earth. There was evidently no help that way. I even regretted having made the hole, fearing that the earth might come in. But another discovery soon took up my attention. In order to try to find a crack somewhere, I tapped the sides of the coffin with my hand. To right and to left the sound was heavy and echoless. But when I kicked lightly at the end of the coffin it seemed to me that the noise was more hollow. Of course, this might have been simply the greater resonance of the wood. Then I began to push, first with arms and then with the knees. The wood resisted. Finally I put the strength of my whole body into violent kicks, but there was not even a crack. My bones ached so that I cried out. It was at this moment that I lost my head.

Up to that time I had held out against a

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vertigo, the gusts of rage that mounted to my head like fumes of wine. Above all, I was careful to repress my cries, for I knew that, if I cried out, I was lost. All at once I began to shriek, to yell. It was too much for me. I called for help in a voice that I did not recognise, protesting that I would not die. And I scratched the wood with my nails, twisting myself into convulsions like a trapped wolf. How long did this attack last? I do not know, but I still feel the implacability of the coffin that confined me; I still hear the storm of cries and sobs that shook me. In a last glimmering of reason, I tried to contain myself and could not.

A great exhaustion followed. I waited, in a sort of painful stupor, for death. The coffin was stone; I should never be able to breathe. This certainty of my failure left me faint, without courage to make a new attempt. Another pang, that of hunger, united with cold and suffocation to destroy me. I despaired. Soon this last torture became unendurable. With my finger I tried to draw pinches of earth through the knothole, and I ate this earth. I bit my arms, but I dared not draw the blood. My flesh tempted me, and I felt at it gluttonously. Ah, how I wished for death at that instant! All my life I had trembled at the idea of non-existence, and now I desired it—demanded it; nor could it be black enough. What childishness to rebel against this sleep without dreams, this eternity of silence and

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gloom! Oh, to sleep like the stones, to return to dust, to be no more!

My hands mechanically continued their journey about the wood. Suddenly something pricked my left thumb, and the pain roused me out of my stupor. What was that? I felt again and found a nail—a nail that the undertaker's assistants had knocked in crookedly, and which had only entered one side of the coffin. It was very long and pointed. The head remained in the lid, but I felt it move under my hand. From that moment I had only one thought—to get that nail. I passed my right hand over my chest and commenced to work it sideways. It did not yield much, and the work was hard. I often changed my hands, for the left, narrowly hemmed in, quickly became tired. While I was thus occupied, a complete plan developed in my head. This nail would be my salvation. It was necessary to me. But would there still be time? Hunger tortured me, and at intervals I was compelled to stop working by an attack of dizziness which left my muscles powerless and my mind feeble. I had sucked up the drops of blood which ran from the scratch on my thumb. Then I bit my arm and drank the blood, spurred on by pain and revived by the warm and bitter wine that moistened my mouth. And I went at the nail again with both hands. This time I succeeded in extricating it.

From then dated my belief in ultimate success. My plan was a simple one. I pressed the point

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of the nail into the wood of the coffin lid, and moved it lengthwise, backward and forward, so as to make a deep gash. My hands became numb, and I worked myself into a furious passion against my own weakness. After I had cut sufficiently deep into the wood, it was my plan to turn over on my stomach and raise myself on my knees. This I did, but, although the lid cracked, it did not break. The cut was not yet deep enough. I had to turn over again on my back and begin over afresh. At the second attempt the lid split from one end to the other. True, I was not saved yet, but hope filled my heart. I stopped pushing and remained motionless, fearing some fall of the earth that might smother me. My idea was to use the lid as a sort of shield, while I tried to tunnel through the earth. Unfortunately, this scheme presented great difficulties. Heavy clods of earth, detached from the general mass, clogged the boards so that I could not budge them. Dust was already getting into my mouth and eyes, and I was forced to keep my face downward. I never should be able to reach the light in this way. Fear was again taking possession of me, when—as I was stretching out to find some more comfortable posture—I fancied that the end of the coffin yielded to the pressure of my feet. I kicked vigorously with my heel, thinking that beyond that board of the coffin there might be an unoccupied grave.

All at once my feet shot out into the air.

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My surmise was correct: a newly made grave was there. I had only a slender division of earth to push through in order to roll into it. Great God, I was saved!

For an instant I lay on my back at the bottom of the open grave, looking at the sky. It was night. Above, the stars twinkled out of a canopy of velvet. Occasionally the breeze would bring to me a taste of the softness of spring or the sweet smell of trees. Great God! I was saved, I breathed, I was warm, and I wept; and I sobbed, my hands devoutly raised toward infinity. Oh, but it was good to live!

My first thought was to direct my steps to the house of the cemetery's caretaker, so that he might send me home. But certain thoughts, still undefined, stopped me. I should terrify everybody. Why hurry, when I was master of the situation? I felt my limbs. With the exception of the slight traces of my teeth in my left arm, I was sound; and the fever caused by that injury gave me unlooked-for strength. Certainly I should be able to walk without assistance. So I took my time. All sorts of confused thoughts passed through my brain. I had felt, as I tumbled into the grave, spades left by the diggers, and with these I felt impelled to repair the damage that I had done, to fill in the hole, so that no one would know of my resurrection. At this time I had no definite plan; I merely thought it unnecessary to let my adventure be known, feeling a certain shame at

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living when every one believed me dead. After half an hour's work, all traces of the hole had been effaced. Then I climbed out of the grave.

What a beautiful night! A deep silence reigned in the cemetery. The black trees seemed motionless shadows among the whiteness of the tombstones. As I sought my way out, I noticed that half the horizon flamed with light. Paris was there. I went in that direction, walking along an avenue, in the darkness of its trees. But I had not taken many steps before I had to stop, already fatigued; and I sat down on a stone bench. I found then that I was completely dressed, even to my boots, and that I only lacked a hat. How I thanked my dear Marguerite for the pious sentiment that had led her to dress me! The sudden memory of Marguerite brought me to my feet. I wished to see her.

At the end of the avenue a wall stopped me. I climbed on one of the tombstones, from which I gained the coping. On the other side of the wall I dropped. The shock was severe. For some minutes I walked along a wide, deserted street which skirted the cemetery. I knew nothing of my whereabouts, but I repeated to myself, with the obstinacy of a fixed idea, that I was going to Paris and to the Rue Dauphine. People passed me, but I did not even question them, mistrusting every one, and wishing to confide in nobody. I now remember that I was shaken by a heavy fever, and that my

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mind was wandering. At last, as I turned into a great thoroughfare, I was seized with faintness, and fell heavily on the footwalk.

For three weeks I was unconscious. When at last I came to my senses, I found myself in a strange room. A man was there, tending me. He told me simply that he had found me, one morning, on the Boulevard Montparnasse, and had taken me home with him. He was an old doctor who had given up his practice. When I thanked him, he replied brusquely that my case had struck him as interesting, and that he wished to study it. Moreover, in the first days of my convalescence he would not allow me to ask him any questions. Later, he put some to me. For another week I kept to my bed, my mind being in such a state that I did not even try to remember anything, for memory was weariness and sorrow. I felt myself filled with shame and fear. When I was able to go out, I would see. Perhaps, in my delirium, I had murmured names; but the doctor never alluded to anything that I might have said. He was discreet in his charity.

However, the summer had arrived. One June morning I obtained permission to take a short walk. It was a glorious morning, one of those sunny days that give youth to the streets of old Paris. I walked slowly, asking at each corner for the Rue Dauphine. When I reached it I had difficulty in recognising the little lodgings-

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house where we had lived. A childish fear agitated me. If I suddenly appeared before Marguerite I feared that the shock might kill her. The best thing, probably, would be first to see the old woman, Mme. Gabin, who probably still lived there. But the idea of putting some one between us displeased me. I would stop at nothing. At the bottom of my heart there seemed to be a great void, as though created by some sacrifice made a long time since.

The house shone yellow in the sun. I recognised it from a little cheap restaurant on the ground floor, at which we had often eaten. I raised my eyes to the last window on the third floor to the left. It was wide open. All at once a young woman, not completely dressed, looked out. Behind her a young man approached, and kissed her on the neck. It was not Marguerite. I was not surprised. It seemed as though I had already dreamed that, as well as other things I was about to see.

For a moment I stood in the street undecided, wondering whether or not to go up and question the young lovers, who were still laughing in the sun. Then I thought it best to go into the little restaurant below. I could hardly be recognised: my beard had grown during my illness, and my face was lined. As I sat down at a table I saw Mme. Gabin, who had just entered, with a cup for two sous' worth of coffee. As she stood at the counter she gossiped with the proprietress. I listened.

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"Well!" asked the woman, "has the poor little woman on the third floor decided yet?"

"What do you think?" replied Mme. Gabin. "Can she do better? And M. Simoneau has been so kind to her. He has wound up his father's affairs; he has a lot of money, and has offered to take her to the country with him to live with one of his aunts, who wants a companion."

The woman behind the counter giggled. I had buried my face in a newspaper, and my hands trembled.

"It will certainly end in marriage," Mme. Gabin went on. "But I give you my word of honour that I have seen nothing improper. The poor woman was mourning for her husband, and the young man conducted himself perfectly. However, they went away yesterday. After her term of mourning has expired, they will be able to do what they like."

Just then the door opened and Dédé came in.

"Aren't you coming up, mama? I am waiting. Come quick."

"Presently. Don't be in such a hurry!" said the mother.

The little girl remained, listening to the two women, with the precocious air of the Paris street-child.

"Well! After all," continued Mme. Gabin, "the husband was no match for M. Simoneau. I never liked him, the little whippersnapper. Always whining! And not a penny! No! a

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husband like that is not much good for a woman with blood in her veins. Now as for M. Simoneau, there you have a man with money, and strong as a Turk."

"Oh!" interrupted Dédé, "I saw him myself, one day while he was shaving. He had hair on his arms!"

"Will you go!" cried the old woman, shaking her. "You are always sticking your nose where it ought not to be."

Then, concluding:

"Yes, the other did well to die. It was a fine piece of luck."

When I again found myself in the street I walked slowly and with difficulty. I did not suffer much, however. I even smiled when I saw my shadow in the sun. Certainly I was very thin; it was a singular idea for me to marry Marguerite. And I recalled how tired she was of Guerande, her fits of impatience, her dull and unhappy life. The dear creature was always so good. But I had never been her lover; it was a brother whom she mourned. Why should I disturb her life again? A dead man is not jealous. When I raised my head I saw the Luxembourg gardens before me. I went in and sat in the sun, lost in agreeable reveries. The thought of Marguerite was pleasant now. I imagined her in a little town in the country, very happy, much beloved, and much admired, grown still more beautiful, and with three sons and two daughters. Come! I was a fine fellow

## The Death of Olivier Bécaille

dead, and I would certainly not make the cruel mistake of coming to life.

Since that time I have travelled much, and lived in many lands. I am a commonplace man, who has worked and eaten like every one else. Death no longer terrifies me; but it seems that he does not want me now that I have no reason to live, and I am afraid he may have forgotten me.

## THE NECKLACE

BY

HENRI RENE ALBERT GUY DE MAUPASSANT

SHE was one of those pretty, charming girls who are sometimes, as if through the irony of fate, born into a family of clerks. She was without dowry or expectations, and had no means of becoming known, appreciated, loved, wedded, by any rich or influential man; so she allowed herself to be married to a small clerk belonging to the Ministry of Public Instruction. She dressed plainly because she could not afford to dress well, and was unhappy because she felt she had dropped from her proper station, which for women is a matter of attractiveness, beauty, and grace, rather than of family descent. Good manners, an intuitive knowledge of what is elegant, nimbleness of wit, are the only requirements necessary to place a woman of the people on an equality with one of the aristocracy.

She fretted constantly, feeling all things delicate and luxurious to be her birthright. She suffered on account of the meagreness of her surroundings, the bareness of the walls, the tarnished furniture, the ugly curtains; deficiencies which would have left any other woman of her class untouched, irritated and tormented

## The Necklace

her. The sight of the little Breton peasant who did her humble housework engendered hopeless regrets followed by fantastic dreams. She thought of a noiseless, hallowed ante-room, with Oriental carpets, lighted with tall branching candlesticks of bronze and of two big, knee-breeched footmen, drowsy from the stove-heated air, dozing in great arm-chairs. She thought of a long drawing-room hung with ancient brocade, of a beautiful cabinet holding priceless curios, of an alluring, scented boudoir intended for five-o'clock chats with intimates, with men famous and courted, and whose acquaintance is longed for by all women.

When she sat down to dinner, at the round table spread with a cloth three days old, opposite her husband who uncovered the tureen, and exclaimed with ecstasy, "Ah, I like a good stew! I know nothing to beat this!" she thought of dainty dinners, of shining plate, of tapestry which peopled the walls with human shapes, and with strange birds flying among fairy trees. And then she thought of delicious viands served in costly dishes, and of murmured gallantries which you listen to with a comfortable smile while you are eating the rose-tinted flesh of a trout or the wing of a quail.

She had no handsome gowns, no jewels—nothing, though these were her whole life; it was these that meant existence to her. She would so have liked to please, to be thought fascinating, to be envied, to be sought out. She had a friend, a

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former schoolmate at the convent, who was rich, but whom she did not like to go to see any more because she would come home jealous, covetous.

But one evening her husband returned home jubilant, holding a large envelope in his hand.

"Here is something for you," he said.

She tore open the cover sharply, and drew out a printed card bearing these words: "The Minister of Public Instruction and Mme. Georges Ramponneau request the honour of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the palace of the Ministry on Monday evening, January 18th."

Instead of being delighted as her husband expected, she threw the invitation on the table with disgust, muttering, "What do you think I can do with that?"

"But, my dear, I thought you would be pleased. You never go anywhere, and this is such a rare opportunity. I had hard work to get it. Every one is wild to go; it is very select, and invitations to clerks are scarce. The whole official world will be there."

She looked at him with a scornful eye, as she said petulantly, "And what have I to put on my back?" He had not thought of that. He stammered, "Why, the dress you wear to the theatre; it looks all right to me."

He stopped in despair, seeing his wife was crying. Two big tears rolled down from the corners of her eyes to the corners of her mouth.

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"What's the matter? What's the matter?" he faltered.

With great effort, she controlled herself, and replied coldly, while she dried her wet cheeks:

"Nothing, except that I have no dress, and, for that reason, cannot go to the ball. Give your invitation to some fellow-clerk whose wife is better provided than I am."

He was dumfounded, but replied:

"Come, Mathilde, let us see now—how much would a suitable dress cost; one you could wear at other times—something quite simple?"

She pondered several moments, calculating, and guessing too, how much she could safely ask for without an instant refusal or bringing down upon her head a volley of objections from her frugal husband.

At length she said hesitatingly, "I can't say exactly, but I think I could do with four hundred francs."

He changed colour because he was laying aside just that sum to buy a gun and treat himself to a little shooting next summer on the plain of Nanterre, with several friends, who went down there on Sundays to shoot larks. Nevertheless, he said: "Very well, I will give you four hundred francs. Get a pretty dress."

The day of the ball drew near, and Mme. Loisel seemed despondent, nervous, upset, though her dress was all ready. One evening her husband observed: "I say, what is the

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matter, Mathilde? You have been very queer lately." And she replied, "It exasperates me not to have a single ornament of any kind to put on. I shall look like a fright—I would almost rather stay at home." He answered: "Why not wear flowers? They are very fashionable at this time of the year. You can get a handful of fine roses for ten francs."

But she was not persuaded. "No, it's so mortifying to look poverty-stricken among women who are rich."

Then her husband exclaimed: "How slow you are! Go and see your friend, Mme. Forestier, and ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her well enough to do that."

She gave an exclamation of delight: "True! I never thought of that!"

Next day she went to her friend and poured out her woes. Mme. Forestier went to a closet with a glass door, took out a large jewel-box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Mme. Loisel, "Here, take your choice, my dear."

She looked at some bracelets, then at a pearl necklace, and then at a Venetian cross curiously wrought of gold and precious stones. She tried on the ornaments before the mirror, hesitated, was loath to take them off and return them. She kept inquiring, "Have you any more?"

"Certainly, look for yourself. I don't know what you want."

Suddenly Mathilde discovered, in a black satin box, a magnificent necklace of diamonds, and

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her heart began to beat with excitement. With trembling hands she took the necklace and fastened it round her neck outside her dress, becoming lost in admiration of herself as she looked in the glass. Tremulous with fear lest she be refused, she asked, "Will you lend me this—only this?"

"Yes, of course I will."

Mathilde fell upon her friend's neck, kissed her passionately, and rushed off with her treasure.

The day of the ball arrived.

Mme. Loisel was a great success. She was prettier than them all, lovely, gracious, smiling, and wild with delight. All the men looked at her, inquired her name, tried to be introduced; all the officials of the Ministry wanted a waltz—even the minister himself noticed her. She danced with abandon, with ecstasy, intoxicated with joy, forgetting everything in the triumph of her beauty, in the radiance of her success, in a kind of mirage of bliss made up of all this worship, this adulation, of all these stirring impulses, and of that realisation of perfect surrender, so sweet to the soul of woman.

She left about four in the morning.

Since midnight her husband had been sleeping in a little deserted anteroom with three other men whose wives were enjoying themselves. He threw over her shoulders the wraps he had brought, ordinary, everyday garments, con-

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trasting sorrily with her elegant ball dress. She felt this, and wanted to get away so as not to be seen by the other women, who were putting on costly furs.

Loisel detained her: "Wait a little; you will catch cold outside; I will go and call a cab."

But she would not listen to him, and hurried down-stairs. When they reached the street they could not find a carriage, and they began to look for one, shouting to the cabmen who were passing by. They went down toward the river in desperation, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quays one of those antiquated, all-night broughams, which, in Paris, wait till after dark before venturing to display their dilapidation. It took them to their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and once more, wearily, they climbed the stairs.

Now all was over for her; as for him, he remembered that he must be at his office at ten o'clock. She threw off her cloak before the glass, that she might behold herself once more in all her magnificence. Suddenly she uttered a cry of dismay—the necklace was gone!

Her husband, already half-undressed, called out, "Anything wrong?"

She turned wildly toward him: "I have—I have—I've lost Mme. Forestier's necklace!"

He stood aghast: "Where? When? You haven't!"

They looked in the folds of her dress, in the

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folds of her cloak, in her pocket, everywhere. They could not find it.

"Are you sure," he said, "that you had it on when you left the ball?"

"Yes; I felt it in the corridor of the palace."

"But if you had lost it in the street, we should have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"No doubt. Did you take his number?"

"No. And didn't you notice it either?"

"No."

They looked at each other, terror-stricken. At last Loisel put on his clothes.

"I shall go back on foot," he said, "over the whole route we came by, to see if I can't find it."

He went out, and she sat waiting in her ball dress, too dazed to go to bed, cold, crushed, lifeless, unable to think. Her husband came back at seven o'clock. He had found nothing. He went to Police Headquarters, to the newspaper office—where he advertised a reward. He went to the cab companies—to every place, in fact, that seemed at all hopeful.

She waited all day in the same awful state of mind at this terrible misfortune.

Loisel returned at night with a wan, white face. He had found nothing.

"Write immediately to your friend," said he, "that you have broken the clasp of her necklace, and that you have taken it to be mended. That will give us time to turn about."

She wrote as he told her.

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By the end of the week they had given up all hope. Loisel, who looked five years older, said, "We must plan how we can replace the necklace."

The next day they took the black satin box to the jeweller whose name was found inside. He referred to his books.

"You did not buy that necklace of me, Madame. I can only have supplied the case."

They went from jeweller to jeweller, hunting for a necklace like the lost one, trying to remember its appearance, heartsick with shame and misery. Finally, in a shop at the Palais Royal, they found a string of diamonds which looked to them just like the other. The price was forty thousand francs, but they could have it for thirty-six thousand. They begged the jeweller to keep it three days for them, and made an agreement with him that he should buy it back for thirty-four thousand francs if they found the lost necklace before the last of February.

Loisel had inherited eighteen thousand francs from his father. He could borrow the remainder. And he did borrow right and left, asking a thousand francs of one, five hundred of another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, assumed heavy obligations, trafficked with money-lenders at usurious rates, and, putting the rest of his life in pawn, pledged his signature over and over again. Not knowing how he was to make it all good, and terrified by the penalty

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yet to come, by the dark destruction which hung over him, by the certainty of incalculable deprivations of body and tortures of soul, he went to get the new bauble, throwing down upon the jeweller's counter the thirty-six thousand francs.

When Mme. Loisel returned the necklace, Mme. Forestier said to her coldly: "Why did you not bring it back sooner? I might have wanted it."

She did not open the case—to the great relief of her friend.

Supposing she had! Would she have discovered the substitution, and what would she have said? Would she not have accused Mme. Loisel of theft?

Mme. Loisel now knew what it was to be in want, but she showed sudden and remarkable courage. That awful debt must be paid, and she would pay it.

They sent away their servant, and moved up into a garret under the roof. She began to find out what heavy housework and the fatiguing drudgery of the kitchen meant. She washed the dishes, scraping the greasy pots and pans with her rosy nails. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and dish-towels, which dried upon the line. She lugged slops and refuse down to the street every morning, bringing back fresh water, stopping on every landing, panting for breath. With her basket on her arm, and dressed like a woman of the people, she haggled with the

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fruiterer, the grocer, and the butcher, often insulted, but getting every sou's worth that belonged to her.

Each month notes had to be met, others renewed, extensions of time procured. Her husband worked in the evenings, straightening out tradesmen's accounts; he sat up late at night, copying manuscripts at five sous a page.

And this they did for ten years.

At the end of that time they had paid up everything, everything—with all the principal and the accumulated compound interest.

Mme. Loisel looked old now. She had become a domestic drudge, sinewy, rough-skinned, coarse. With towslod hair, tucked-up skirts, and red hands, she would talk loudly while mopping the floor with great splashes of water. But sometimes, when alone, she sat near the window, and she thought of that gay evening long ago, of the ball where she had been so beautiful, so much admired. Supposing she had not lost the necklace — what then? Who knows? Who knows? Life is so strange and shifting. How easy it is to be ruined or saved!

But one Sunday, going for a walk in the Champs Élysées to refresh herself after her hard week's work, she accidentally came upon a familiar-looking woman with a child. It was Mme. Forestier, still young, still lovely, still charming.

Mme. Loisel became agitated. Should she

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speak to her? Of course. Now that she had paid, she would tell her all about it. Why not? She went up to her.

"How do you do, Jeanne?"

The other, astonished at the easy manner toward her assumed by a plain housewife whom she did not recognise, said:

"But, Madame, you have made a mistake; I do not know you."

"Why, I am Mathilde Loisel!"

Her friend gave a start.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde," she cried, "how you have changed!"

"Yes; I have seen hard days since last I saw you; hard enough—and all because of you."

"Of me? And why?"

"You remember the diamond necklace you loaned me to wear at the Ministry ball?"

"Yes, I do. What of it?"

"Well, I lost it!"

"But you brought it back—explain yourself."

"I bought one just like it, and it took us ten years to pay for it. It was not easy for us who had nothing, but it is all over now, and I am glad."

Mme. Forestier stared.

"And you bought a necklace of diamonds to replace mine?"

"Yes; and you never knew the difference, they were so alike." And she smiled with joyful pride at the success of it all.

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Mme. Forestier, deeply moved, took both her hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! My necklace was paste. It was worth only about five hundred francs!"

# THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL

BY

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

THE sexton stood in the porch of Milford meeting-house, pulling busily at the bell-rope. The old people of the village came stooping along the street. Children, with bright faces, tripped merrily beside their parents, or mimicked a graver gait, in the conscious dignity of their Sunday clothes. Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on week days. When the throng had mostly streamed into the porch, the sexton began to toll the bell, keeping his eye on the Reverend Mr. Hooper's door. The first glimpse of the clergyman's figure was the signal for the bell to cease its summons.

"But what has good Parson Hooper got upon his face?" cried the sexton in astonishment.

All within hearing immediately turned about, and beheld the semblance of Mr. Hooper, pacing slowly his meditative way toward the meeting-house. With one accord they started, expressing more wonder than if some strange minister were coming to dust the cushions of Mr. Hooper's pulpit.

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"Are you sure it is our parson?" inquired Goodman Gray of the sexton.

"Of a certainty it is good Mr. Hooper," replied the sexton. "He was to have exchanged pulpits with Parson Shute, of Westbury; but Parson Shute sent to excuse himself yesterday, having to preach a funeral sermon."

The cause of so much amazement may appear sufficiently slight. Mr. Hooper, a gentlemanly person, of about thirty, though still a bachelor, was dressed with due clerical neatness, as if a careful wife had starched his band, and brushed the weekly dust from his Sunday's garb. There was but one thing remarkable in his appearance. Swathed about his forehead, and hanging down over his face, so low as to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil. On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape which entirely concealed his features except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things. With this gloomy shade before him, good Mr. Hooper walked onward at a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat and looking on the ground, as is customary with abstracted men, yet nodding kindly to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meeting-house steps. But so wonder-struck were they that his greeting hardly met with a return.

"I can't really feel as if good Mr. Hooper's face was behind that piece of crape," said the sexton.

## The Minister's Black Veil

"I don't like it," muttered an old woman, as she hobbled into the meeting-house. "He has changed himself into something awful, only by hiding his face."

"Our parson has gone mad!" cried Goodman Gray, following him across the threshold.

A rumour of some unaccountable phenomenon had preceded Mr. Hooper into the meeting-house, and set all the congregation astir. Few could refrain from twisting their heads toward the door; many stood upright, and turned directly about; while several little boys clambered upon the seats, and came down again with a terrible racket. There was a general bustle, a rustling of the women's gowns and shuffling of the men's feet, greatly at variance with that hushed repose which should attend the entrance of the minister. But Mr. Hooper appeared not to notice the perturbation of his people. He entered with an almost noiseless step, bent his head mildly to the pews on each side, and bowed as he passed his oldest parishioner, a white-haired great-grandsire, who occupied an arm-chair in the centre of the aisle. It was strange to observe how slowly this venerable man became conscious of something singular in the appearance of his pastor. He seemed not fully to partake of the prevailing wonder till Mr. Hooper had ascended the stairs, and showed himself in the pulpit, face to face with his congregation, except for the black veil. That mysterious emblem was never once

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withdrawn. It shook with his measured breath as he gave out the psalm; it threw its obscurity between him and the holy page as he read the Scriptures; and while he prayed, the veil lay heavily on his uplifted countenance. Did he seek to hide it from the dread Being whom he was addressing?"

Such was the effect of this simple piece of crape, that more than one woman of delicate nerves was forced to leave the meeting-house. Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister, as his black veil to them.

Mr. Hooper had the reputation of a good preacher, but not an energetic one: he strove to win his people heavenward by mild, persuasive influences, rather than to drive them thither by the thunders of the Word. The sermon which he now delivered was marked by the same characteristics of style and manner as the general series of his pulpit oratory. But there was something, either in the sentiment of the discourse itself, or in the imagination of the auditors, which made it greatly the most powerful effort that they had ever heard from their pastor's lips. It was tinged, rather more darkly than usual, with the gentle gloom of Mr. Hooper's temperament. The subject had reference to secret sin, and those sad mysteries which we hide from our nearest and dearest, and would fain conceal from our own consciousness, even forgetting that the Omniscient can detect

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them. A subtle power was breathed into his words. Each member of the congregation, the most innocent girl, and the man of hardened breast, felt as if the preacher had crept upon them, behind his awful veil, and discovered their hoarded iniquity of deed or thought. Many spread their clasped hands on their bosoms. There was nothing terrible in what Mr. Hooper said—at least, no violence; and yet, with every tremor of his melancholy voice, the hearers quaked. An unsought pathos came hand in hand with awe. So sensible were the audience of some unwonted attribute in their minister that they longed for a breath of wind to blow aside the veil, almost believing that a stranger's visage would be discovered, though the form, gesture, and voice were those of Mr. Hooper.

At the close of the services, the people hurried out with indecorous confusion, eager to communicate their pent-up amazement, and conscious of lighter spirits the moment they lost sight of the black veil. Some gathered in little circles, huddled closely together, with their mouths all whispering in the centre; some went homeward alone, wrapt in silent meditation; some talked loudly, and profaned the Sabbath day with ostentatious laughter. A few shook their sagacious heads, intimating that they could penetrate the mystery; while one or two affirmed that there was no mystery at all, but only that Mr. Hooper's eyes were so weakened

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by the midnight lamp as to require a shade. After a brief interval, forth came good Mr. Hooper also, in the rear of his flock. Turning his veiled face from one group to another, he paid due reverence to the hoary heads, saluted the middle-aged with kind dignity as their friend and spiritual guide, greeted the young with mingled authority and love, and laid his hands on the little children's heads to bless them. Such was always his custom on the Sabbath day. Strange and bewildered looks repaid him for his courtesy. None, as on former occasions, aspired to the honour of walking by their pastor's side. Old Squire Saunders, doubtless by an accidental lapse of memory, neglected to invite Mr. Hooper to his table, where the good clergyman had been wont to bless the food, almost every Sunday since his settlement. He returned, therefore, to the parsonage, and, at the moment of closing the door, was observed to look back upon the people, all of whom had their eyes fixed upon the minister. A sad smile gleamed faintly from beneath the black veil, and flickered about his mouth, glimmering as he disappeared.

"How strange," said a lady, "that a simple black veil, such as any woman might wear on her bonnet, should become such a terrible thing on Mr. Hooper's face!"

"Something must surely be amiss with Mr. Hooper's intellect," observed her husband, the physician of the village. "But the strangest

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part of the affair is the effect of this vagary, even on a sober-minded man like myself. The black veil, though it covers only our pastor's face, throws its influence over his whole person, and makes him ghostlike from head to foot. Do you not feel it so?"

"Truly do I," replied the lady; "and I would not be alone with him for the world. I wonder he is not afraid to be alone with himself!"

"Men sometimes are so," said her husband.

The afternoon service was attended with similar circumstances. At its conclusion, the bell tolled for the funeral of a young lady. The relatives and friends were assembled in the house, and the more distant acquaintances stood about the door, speaking of the good qualities of the deceased, when their talk was interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Hooper, still covered with his black veil. It was now an appropriate emblem. The clergyman stepped into the room where the corpse was laid, and bent over the coffin, to take a last farewell of his deceased parishioner. As he stooped, the veil hung straight down from his forehead, so that, if her eyelids had not been closed forever, the dead maiden might have seen his face. Could Mr. Hooper be fearful of her glance, that he so hastily caught back the black veil? A person who watched the interview between the dead and living, scrupled not to affirm, that, at the instant when the clergyman's features were disclosed, the corpse had slightly shuddered

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rustling the shroud and muslin cap, though the countenance retained the composure of death. A superstitious old woman was the only witness of this prodigy. From the coffin Mr. Hooper passed into the chamber of the mourners, and thence to the head of the staircase, to make the funeral prayer. It was a tender and heart-dissolving prayer, full of sorrow, yet so imbued with celestial hopes that the music of a heavenly harp, swept by the fingers of the dead, seemed faintly to be heard among the saddest accents of the minister. The people trembled, though they but darkly understood him when he prayed that they, and himself, and all of mortal race, might be ready, as he trusted this young maiden had been, for the dreadful hour that should snatch the veil from their faces. The bearers went heavily forth, and the mourners followed, saddening all the street, with the dead before them, and Mr. Hooper in his black veil behind.

"Why do you look back?" said one in the procession to his partner.

"I had a fancy," replied she, "that the minister and the maiden's spirit were walking hand in hand."

"And so had I, at the same moment," said the other.

That night, the handsomest couple in Milford village were to be joined in wedlock. Though reckoned a melancholy man, Mr. Hooper had a placid cheerfulness for such occasions, which

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often excited a sympathetic smile where livelier merriment would have been thrown away. There was no quality of his disposition which made him more beloved than this. The company at the wedding awaited his arrival with impatience, trusting that the strange awe, which had gathered over him throughout the day, would now be dispelled. But such was not the result. When Mr. Hooper came, the first thing that their eyes rested on was the same horrible black veil, which had added deeper gloom to the funeral, and could portend nothing but evil to the wedding. Such was its immediate effect on the guests that a cloud seemed to have rolled duskily from beneath the black crape, and dimmed the light of the candles. The bridal pair stood up before the minister. But the bride's cold fingers quivered in the tremulous hand of the bridegroom, and her deathlike paleness caused a whisper that the maiden who had been buried a few hours before was come from her grave to be married. If ever another wedding were so dismal, it was that famous one where they tolled the wedding knell. After performing the ceremony, Mr. Hooper raised a glass of wine to his lips, wishing happiness to the new-married couple in a strain of mild pleasantry that ought to have brightened the features of the guests, like a cheerful gleam from the hearth. At that instant, catching a glimpse of his figure in the looking-glass, the black veil involved his own spirit in the horror

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with which it overwhelmed all others. His frame shuddered, his lips grew white, he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet, and rushed forth into the darkness. For the Earth, too, had on her Black Veil.

The next day, the whole village of Milford talked of little else than Parson Hooper's black veil. That, and the mystery concealed behind it, supplied a topic for discussion between acquaintances meeting in the street, and good women gossiping at their open windows. It was the first item of news that the tavern-keeper told to his guests. The children babbled of it on their way to school. One imitative little imp covered his face with an old black handkerchief, thereby so affrighting his playmates that the panic seized himself, and he well-nigh lost his wits by his own wagging.

It was remarkable that of all the busybodies and impertinent people in the parish, not one ventured to put the plain question to Mr. Hooper, wherefore he did this thing. Hitherto, whenever there appeared the slightest call for such interference, he had never lacked advisers, nor shown himself averse to be guided by their judgment. If he erred at all, it was by so painful a degree of self-distrust, that even the mildest censure would lead him to consider an indifferent action as a crime. Yet, though so well acquainted with this amiable weakness, no individual among his parishioners chose to make the black veil a subject of friendly re-

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monstrance. There was a feeling of dread, neither plainly confessed nor carefully concealed, which caused each to shift the responsibility upon another, till at length it was found expedient to send a deputation of the church, in order to deal with Mr. Hooper about the mystery, before it should grow into a scandal. Never did an embassy so ill discharge its duties. The minister received them with friendly courtesy, but became silent after they were seated, leaving to his visitors the whole burden of introducing their important business. The topic, it might be supposed, was obvious enough. There was the black veil swathed round Mr. Hooper's forehead, and concealing every feature above his placid mouth, on which, at times, they could perceive the glimmering of a melancholy smile. But that piece of crape, to their imagination, seemed to hang down before his heart, the symbol of a fearful secret between him and them. Were the veil but cast aside, they might speak freely of it, but not till then. Thus they sat a considerable time, speechless, confused, and shrinking uneasily from Mr. Hooper's eye, which they felt to be fixed upon them with an invisible glance. Finally, the deputies returned abashed to their constituents, pronouncing the matter too weighty to be handled, except by a council of the churches, if, indeed, it might not require a general synod.

But there was one person in the village unappalled by the awe with which the black veil

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had impressed all besides herself. When the deputies returned without an explanation, or even venturing to demand one, she, with the calm energy of her character, determined to chase away the strange cloud that appeared to be settling round Mr. Hooper, every moment more darkly than before. As his plighted wife, it should be her privilege to know what the black veil concealed. At the minister's first visit, therefore, she entered upon the subject with a direct simplicity, which made the task easier both for him and her. After he had seated himself, she fixed her eyes steadfastly upon the veil, but could discern nothing of the dreadful gloom that had so overawed the multitude: it was but a double fold of crape, hanging down from his forehead to his mouth, and slightly stirring with his breath.

"No," said she aloud, and smiling, "there is nothing terrible in this piece of crape, except that it hides a face which I am always glad to look upon. Come, good sir, let the sun shine from behind the cloud. First lay aside your black veil: then tell me why you put it on."

Mr. Hooper's smile glimmered faintly.

"There is an hour to come," said he, "when all of us shall cast aside our veils. Take it not amiss, beloved friend, if I wear this piece of crape till then."

"Your words are a mystery, too," returned the young lady. "Take away the veil from them, at least."

## The Minister's Black Veil

"Elizabeth, I will," said he, "so far as my vow may suffer me. Know, then, this veil is a type and a symbol, and I am bound to wear it ever, both in light and darkness, in solitude and before the gaze of multitudes, and as with strangers, so with my familiar friends. No mortal eye will see it withdrawn. This dismal shade must separate me from the world: even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!"

"What grievous affliction hath befallen you?" she earnestly inquired, "that you should thus darken your eyes forever?"

"If it be a sign of mourning," replied Mr. Hooper, "I, perhaps, like most other mortals, have sorrows dark enough to be typified by a black veil."

"But what if the world will not believe that it is the type of an innocent sorrow?" urged Elizabeth. "Beloved and respected as you are, there may be whispers that you hide your face under the consciousness of secret sin. For the sake of your holy office, do away with this scandal!"

The colour rose into her cheeks as she intimated the nature of the rumours that were already abroad in the village. But Mr. Hooper's mildness did not forsake him. He even smiled again—that same sad smile, which always appeared like a faint glimmering of light, proceeding from the obscurity beneath the veil.

"If I hide my face for sorrow, there is cause enough," he merely replied; "and if I cover it

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for secret sin, what mortal might not do the same?"

And with this gentle, but unconquerable obstinacy did he resist all her entreaties. At length Elizabeth sat silent. For a few moments she appeared lost in thought, considering, probably, what new methods might be tried to withdraw her lover from so dark a fantasy, which, if it had no other meaning, was perhaps a symptom of mental disease. Though of a firmer character than his own, the tears rolled down her cheeks. But in an instant, as it were, a new feeling took the place of sorrow: her eyes were fixed insensibly on the black veil, when, like a sudden twilight in the air, its terrors fell around her. She arose, and stood trembling before him.

"And do you feel it then, at last?" said he mournfully.

She made no reply, but covered her eyes with her hand, and turned to leave the room. He rushed forward and caught her arm.

"Have patience with me, Elizabeth!" cried he, passionately. "Do not desert me, though this veil must be between us here on earth. Be mine, and hereafter there shall be no veil over my face, no darkness between our souls! It is but a mortal veil—it is not for eternity! O! you know not how lonely I am, and how frightened, to be alone behind my black veil. Do not leave me in this miserable obscurity forever!"

## The Minister's Black Veil

"Lift the veil but once, and look me in the face," said she.

"Never! It cannot be!" replied Mr. Hooper.

"Then farewell!" said Elizabeth.

She withdrew her arm from his grasp, and slowly departed, pausing at the door, to give one long, shuddering gaze, that seemed almost to penetrate the mystery of the black veil. But, even amid his grief, Mr. Hooper smiled to think that only a material emblem had separated him from happiness, though the horrors, which it shadowed forth, must be drawn darkly between the fondest of lovers.

From that time no attempts were made to remove Mr. Hooper's black veil, or, by a direct appeal, to discover the secret which it was supposed to hide. By persons who claimed a superiority to popular prejudice, it was reckoned merely an eccentric whim, such as often mingles with the sober actions of men otherwise rational, and tinges them all with its own semblance of insanity. But with the multitude, good Mr. Hooper was irreparably a bugbear. He could not walk the street with any peace of mind, so conscious was he that the gentle and timid would turn aside to avoid him, and that others would make it a point of hardihood to throw themselves in his way. The impertinence of the latter class compelled him to give up his customary walk at sunset to the burial-ground; for when he leaned pensively over the gate, there would always be faces behind the grave.

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stones, peeping at his black veil. A fable went the rounds that the stare of the dead people drove him thence. It grieved him, to the very depth of his kind heart, to observe how the children fled from his approach, breaking up their merriest sports, while his melancholy figure was yet afar off. Their instinctive dread caused him to feel more strongly than aught else that a preternatural horror was interwoven with the threads of the black crape. In truth, his own antipathy to the veil was known to be so great that he never willingly passed before a mirror, nor stooped to drink at a still fountain, lest, in its peaceful bosom, he should be affrighted by himself. This was what gave plausibility to the whispers that Mr. Hooper's conscience tortured him for some great crime too horrible to be entirely concealed, or otherwise than so obscurely intimated. Thus, from beneath the black veil, there rolled a cloud into the sunshine, an ambiguity of sin or sorrow, which enveloped the poor minister, so that love or sympathy could never reach him. It was said that ghost and fiend consorted with him there. With self-shudderings and outward terrors, he walked continually in its shadow, groping darkly within his own soul, or gazing through a medium that saddened the whole world. Even the lawless wind, it was believed, respected his dreadful secret, and never blew aside the veil. But still good Mr. Hooper sadly smiled at the pale visages of the worldly throng as he passed by.

## The Minister's Black Veil

Among all its bad influences, the black veil had the one desirable effect, of making its wearer a very efficient clergyman. By the aid of his mysterious emblem—for there was no other apparent cause—he became a man of awful power over souls that were in agony for sin. His converts always regarded him with a dread peculiar to themselves, affirming, though but figuratively, that, before he brought them to celestial light, they had been with him behind the black veil. Its gloom, indeed, enabled him to sympathise with all dark affections. Dying sinners cried aloud for Mr. Hooper, and would not yield their breath till he appeared; though ever, as he stooped to whisper consolation, they shuddered at the veiled face so near their own. Such were the terrors of the black veil, even when Death had bared his visage! Strangers came long distances to attend service at his church, with the mere idle purpose of gazing at his figure, because it was forbidden them to behold his face. But many were made to quake ere they departed! Once, during Governor Belcher's administration, Mr. Hooper was appointed to preach the election sermon. Covered with his black veil, he stood before the chief magistrate, the council, and the representatives, and wrought so deep an impression that the legislative measures of that year were characterised by all the gloom and piety of our earliest ancestral sway.

In this manner Mr. Hooper spent a long life,

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irreproachable in outward act, yet shrouded in dismal suspicions; kind and loving, though unloved, and dimly feared; a man apart from men, shunned in their health and joy, but ever summoned to their aid in mortal anguish. As years wore on, shedding their snows above his sable veil, he acquired a name throughout the New England churches, and they called him Father Hooper. Nearly all his parishioners, who were of mature age when he was settled, had been borne away by many a funeral: he had one congregation in the church, and a more crowded one in the churchyard; and having wrought so late into the evening, and done his work so well, it was now good Father Hooper's turn to rest.

Several persons were visible by the shaded candlelight, in the death chamber of the old clergyman. Natural connections he had none. But there was the decorously grave, though unmoved physician, seeking only to mitigate the last pangs of the patient whom he could not save. There were the deacons, and other eminently pious members of his church. There, also, was the Reverend Mr. Clark, of Westbury, a young and zealous divine, who had ridden in haste to pray by the bedside of the expiring minister. There was the nurse, no hired hand-maiden of death, but one whose calm affection had endured thus long in secrecy, in solitude, amid the chill of age, and would not perish, even at the dying hour. Who, but Elizabeth!

## The Minister's Black Veil

And there lay the hoary head of good Father Hooper upon the death pillow, with the black veil still swathed about his brow, and reaching down over his face, so that each more difficult gasp of his faint breath caused it to stir. All through life that piece of crape had hung between him and the world: it had separated him from cheerful brotherhood and woman's love, and kept him in that saddest of all prisons, his own heart; and still it lay upon his face, as if to deepen the gloom of his darksome chamber, and shade him from the sunshine of eternity.

For some time previous, his mind had been confused, wavering doubtfully between the past and the present, and hovering forward, as it were, at intervals, into the indistinctness of the world to come. There had been feverish turns, which tossed him from side to side, and wore away what little strength he had. But in his most convulsive struggles, and in the wildest vagaries of his intellect, when no other thought retained its sober influence, he still showed an awful solicitude lest the black veil should slip aside. Even if his bewildered soul could have forgotten, there was a faithful woman at his pillow, who, with averted eyes, would have covered that aged face, which she had last beheld in the comeliness of manhood. At length the death-stricken old man lay quietly in the torpor of mental and bodily exhaustion, with an imperceptible pulse, and breath that grew fainter and fainter, except when a long,

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deep, and irregular inspiration seemed to prelude the flight of his spirit.

The minister of Westbury approached the bedside.

"Venerable Father Hooper," said he, "the moment of your release is at hand. Are you ready for the lifting of the veil that shuts in time from eternity?"

Father Hooper at first replied merely by a feeble motion of his head; then, apprehensive, perhaps, that his meaning might be doubtful, he exerted himself to speak.

"Yea," said he, in faint accents, "my soul hath a patient weariness until that veil be lifted."

"And is it fitting," resumed the Reverend Mr. Clark, "that a man so given to prayer, of such a blameless example, holy in deed and thought, so far as mortal judgment may pronounce; is it fitting that a father in the church should leave a shadow on his memory that may seem to blacken a life so pure? I pray you, my venerable brother, let not this thing be! Suffer us to be gladdened by your triumphant aspect as you go to your reward. Before the veil of eternity be lifted, let me cast aside this black veil from your face!"

And thus speaking, the Reverend Mr. Clark bent forward to reveal the mystery of so many years. But, exerting a sudden energy that made all the beholders stand aghast, Father Hooper snatched both his hands from beneath the bed.

## The Minister's Black Veil

clothes, and pressed them strongly on the black veil, resolute to struggle if the minister of Westbury would contend with a dying man.

"Never!" cried the veiled clergyman. "On earth, never!"

"Dark old man!" exclaimed the affrighted minister, "with what horrible crime upon your soul are you now passing to the judgment?"

Father Hooper's breath heaved; it rattled in his throat; but, with a mighty effort, grasping forward with his hands, he caught hold of life, and held it back till he should speak. He even raised himself in bed; and there he sat, shivering with the arms of death around him, while the black veil hung down, awful, at that last moment, in the gathered terrors of a lifetime. And yet the faint, sad smile, so often there, now seemed to glimmer from its obscurity, and linger on Father Hooper's lips.

"Why do you tremble at me alone?" cried he, turning his veiled face round the circle of pale spectators. "Tremble also at each other! Have men avoided me, and women shown no pity, and children screamed and fled, only for my black veil? What, but the mystery which it obscurely typifies, has made this piece of crape so awful? When the friend shows his inmost heart to his friend; the lover to his best beloved; when man does not vainly shrink from the eye of his Creator, loathsomey treasuring up the secret of his sin—then deem me a monster, for the symbol beneath which I have

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lived, and die! I look around me, and, lo! on  
every visage a Black Veil!"

While his auditors shrank from one another in mutual affright, Father Hooper fell back upon his pillow, a veiled corpse, with a faint smile lingering on the lips. Still veiled, they laid him in his coffin, and a veiled corpse they bore him to the grave. The grass of many years has sprung up and withered on that grave, the burial stone is moss-grown, and good Mr. Hooper's face is dust; but awful is still the thought that it mouldered beneath the **Black Veil!**

# THE SIEGE OF BERLIN

BY

ALPHONSE DAUDET

As we went up the Champs Élysées with Doctor V——, we gleaned the story of Paris the besieged from the walls shattered by shells and the streets torn up by grapeshot. Just before coming to the Place de l'Étoile, the Doctor paused to point out to me one of the imposing group of mansions opposite the Arc de Triomphe.

"Do you see," he said, "the four closed windows up there on the balcony? At the beginning of August—that awful month of August, 1870, so fraught with wreck and ruin—I was called upon to attend an apoplectic case there. The stricken one was Colonel Jouye, a veteran Cuirassier of the First Empire. Surcharged with patriotic feeling and the glory of it, he had taken a balconied apartment in the Champs Élysées when the war broke out—and for what reason, do you imagine? To witness the triumphal return of our troops! Poor old fellow! Word of Wissembourg came as he got up from the table. At seeing Napoleon's name at the bottom of that bulletin of defeat, he fell insensible. I found the old Cuirassier prostrate upon the floor. His face was bloody, and he was

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senseless—as if struck with a club. On his feet, he would have been unusually tall; lying prone, he seemed gigantic. With fine features, splendid teeth, and curly hair, he carried his eighty years as if they were sixty. His granddaughter knelt over him in tears. She bore close resemblance to him. Side by side, they suggested to me two Greek medallions from the same die, only one was antique, earth-marked, its outlines slightly worn, while the other had all the charm of clear and fresh beauty.

"The grief of this child moved me. A daughter and granddaughter of soldiers—her father was one of MacMahon's staff—the spectacle of this old man laid out in front of her brought to her mind another vision not less fearful. I tried my best to comfort her, though really I had little or no hope. We had to deal with hemoptysis, which at eighty is almost certainly fatal. Three days the patient remained thus, in a condition of lifelessness and torpor. In the interim, the news of Reichshofen came—recollect how oddly? Until evening, we all believed in a wonderful victory—twenty thousand Prussians wiped out, and the Crown Prince a prisoner.

"I shall never be able to determine by what miracle or magnetic force an intimation of this universal rejoicing could have reached our invalid. Heretofore, he had been deaf to everything about him, but that evening, on coming to his bedside, I beheld a new creature. His

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eye was bright, his speech easier, and he had sufficient strength to smile and stammer:

“‘Victory, victory.’

“‘Yes, Colonel, a great victory.’

“And, as I related the details of MacMahon’s glorious success, I saw his face soften and become illumined.

“When I was about to go his granddaughter, pale and sobbing, appealed to me.

“‘But he is saved,’ I said, pressing both her hands.

“The poor girl had hardly enough courage to reply. The real Reichshofen had just been announced: MacMahon a fugitive, the whole army beaten. Our eyes met in a look of consternation; she was full of concern for her father, while I feared for the grandfather. This new shock would be too much for him; but what were we to do? Leave him to the enjoyment of the delusion that had restored him to consciousness? To do this, we must practice duplicity. Hastily wiping away her tears, the brave girl said, ‘Well then, I will deceive him,’ and returned to her grandfather’s room with a cheerful face.

“What she had resolved to do was no light task. At first, because of his weak head, the old man believed everything told him with childish credulity. But, as he gained strength, his ideas became clearer.

“To keep in touch with the manoeuvring of the army, despatches from the front were

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fabricated. Pitiable it was, indeed, to see that charming girl poring day and night over her map of Germany, studding it with little flags, planning an entire, splendid campaign—Bazaine on the way to Berlin, Frossard in Bavaria, MacMahon on the Baltic Sea. In doing this she asked for my advice, and I helped her as much as I could, but in these feigned hostilities the grandfather was of the greatest assistance. During the First Empire, he had conquered Germany so often. He knew all the tactics they should employ. ‘Now they will do this. They should go there.’ And he was proud to have all his predictions fulfilled. We captured towns, and won battles, but never fast enough for the Colonel, who was insatiable. He greeted me with a new stratagem every day.

‘‘Mayence is taken, Doctor,’ said the young girl, meeting me with a pitiful smile, and through the door I heard the rapturous cry:

‘‘We are moving, we are moving ! We shall take Berlin in a week !’

‘At that very moment the Prussians wanted but a week to enter Paris. We considered moving to the provinces, but out there, where he could see the havoc made in the country, he would discover the truth, and I thought him still too weak to bear it. We decided to stay in town. On the first day of the siege, I called upon my patient with misgivings, I recollect, and with that heart-agony felt by all at the thought that the gates of Paris were closed, that

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the war had reached our very walls, and that our suburbs and frontiers were one.

"I found the old man elated. 'Well, the siege has begun,' he said. I looked at him in stupefaction.

"'Why, Colonel, how do you know?'"

"His granddaughter glanced at me, and said, 'Oh, yes, Doctor, it is glorious news—the siege of Berlin has begun.'

"She quietly said this while plying her needle. He was entirely without suspicion. The roaring of the cannon he could not hear, nor could he see Paris, the ill-fated, in dark demoralisation. What he did see from the watch-tower of his bed helped to carry out the delusion. With the Arc de Triomphe outside, there were in the room many reminders of the First Empire. Portraits of marshals, engravings of battles, the son of Napoleon in his baby-clothes; the austere brackets decked with brazen battle-memorials, covered with Imperial relics, medals, bronzes; a stone from St. Helena, under a glass shade; numerous miniatures of a light-eyed, much-be-curved lady in ball dress (a yellow gown with leg-of-mutton sleeves); and all these—the brackets, Napoleon's son, the medals, the yellow ladies in the gaudy straightness of the Empire gown, short-waisted and sashed under the arms—it was this environment of victorious warfare which made the siege of Berlin a fact so real to the poor Colonel!

"Thereafter, our military movements were

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less involved, and the taking of Berlin was merely a question of time. When the old man grew impatient with waiting, we would read him a letter from his son, fictitious of course, as nothing entered Paris, and as, since Sedan, Mac-Mahon's aide-de-camp was in a German fortress.

"Imagine, if you can, the desperation of the poor girl, with no news of her father, certain that he was in prison, necessitous, probably sick, and still pretending to make him speak in hopeful letters, properly brief, of course, as from a soldier on duty marching through a subjugated country. Often, when the invalid suffered from excessive weakness, news would not come for weeks. But suddenly, when he was worried and sleepless, a letter would arrive from Germany, which she read merrily at his bedside, choking back her tears. The Colonel listened attentively, with an air of smiling patronage, assenting, censuring, interpreting. But he outdid himself in his replies to his son. 'Always remember that you are a son of France,' he wrote; 'be kind to those unfortunate people. Make the invasion no harder than they can bear.'

"His counsel was unceasing: instructive lectures regarding the rights of others; the courtesy due to ladies—in fact, a complete guide to conquerors on the preservation of military honour. Besides this were some thoughts on diplomacy, and stipulations regarding the terms of peace to be made with the defeated. Con-

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cerning the latter, he was most generous: 'The indemnity of the war, but no more. Of what use is it to take provinces? Germany cannot be changed into France!'

"While giving these directions his voice never faltered, and his words evinced so much honesty of purpose and love of country that we were deeply moved. And all this time the siege was in progress, but not the siege of Berlin, alas!

"The weather was at its coldest, and we were suffering the heaviest bombardment, and the worst horrors of epidemic and famine. But owing to our care, and the unwearied tenderness bestowed upon him, the old man's comfort was never disturbed for a moment. I was even able to obtain white bread and fresh meat for him to the very end, but only for him.

"Could anything have been more touching than those breakfasts of the grandfather, so guilelessly selfish, propped up in bed, bright and smiling, a napkin tucked under his chin, by him his granddaughter wan because of deprivation, directing the movements of his hands, compelling him to drink, urging him to eat the good things procured with such difficulty? Strengthened by a meal, and cheered by the warmth of the room, the old Cuirassier was reminded, by the snow which whirled past the window, to speak of his northern campaigns, and would tell us of that disastrous retreat from Russia, with nothing to eat but frozen biscuit and horse-flesh.

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"Can you imagine that, little one? We ate horse-flesh."

"Of course she could imagine it, since, for two months, she had eaten nothing else!"

"As he grew convalescent, our difficulties increased. The numbness passed from his senses as well as from his limbs, which made it all the harder for us to deceive him. On one or two occasions the cannonading at the Porte Maillot had made him start and listen like a horse on the battle-field; we accounted for it by telling him that Bazaine had just achieved a wonderful victory before Berlin, and what he had heard was the firing of salvos from the Invalides in honour of it.

"On the Thursday of Buzenval, we pushed his bed to the window, from which he saw some of the National Guard massed upon the Avenue de la Grande Armée.

"What soldiers are those?" he inquired, and we heard him muttering, 'Badly drilled—badly drilled.'

"Nothing else was said, but we made up our minds to show more caution in the future. Only, we did not show enough."

"The child met me, one evening, in great distress. 'To-morrow they enter the city,' she said.

"Was her grandfather's door open then? In reflecting upon that evening afterwards, I have remembered that his face indicated great pensiveness. He may accidentally have heard wh—

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we said, thinking only of the French and their long-looked-for return with victory perched on their banners: MacMahon coming down the Avenue showered with flowers, and trumpets blowing a flourish; beside the Marshal, his own son; himself, on his balcony in the full uniform of Lützen, saluting the torn colours and powder-blackened eagles!

"Poor Colonel Jouve! Probably he fancied that we wished to keep him from participating at the defile of our troops, fearing the excitement would be too much for him, and so concealing it from him. But on the morrow, just as the Prussian army crept into the long road leading from the Porte Maillot to the Tuileries, the Colonel, arrayed in the battle-stained but glorious uniform of Milhaud's Cuirassiers, with helmet and sword, quietly raised the window, and stepped out upon the balcony.

"It seemed as if every effort of a fast-failing body and iron will had been summoned for this supreme moment, that he might stand to order, ready in harness.

"But what met his gaze as he stood at the railing? Paris, a hospital; all shutters closed; the broad Avenue silent; flags everywhere, but all white, stained with the red cross of suffering, and no one to meet our soldiers. He may have thought it all a mistake for an instant.

"But no. From behind the Arc de Triomphe comes the muffled sound of advancing troops, stepping to the measured beat of the little

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drums of Jena, then the spikes of helmets catch the sunlight, and, when the Place de l'Étoile is reached, the heavy tramp, tramp, of soldiers to the strains of Schubert's Triumphal March force the shocking truth upon him.

"An awful cry broke the sorrowful silence of the streets—a terrible cry:

"To arms! To arms! The Prussians!"

"The four lancers who were in the vanguard might have looked up and seen a tall, old man wave his arms, stagger, and fall.

"Colonel Jouve had died at his post."

# THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

BY

EDGAR ALLAN POE

I WAS sick—sick unto death with that long agony; and when they at length unbound me, and I was permitted to sit, I felt that my senses were leaving me. The sentence—the dread sentence of death—was the last of distinct accentuation which reached my ears. After that, the sound of the inquisitorial voices seemed merged in one dreamy indeterminate hum. It conveyed to my soul the idea of *revolution*—perhaps from its association in fancy with the burr of a mill-wheel. This, only for a brief period; for presently I heard no more. Yet, for a while, I saw; but with how terrible an exaggeration! I saw the lips of the black-robed judges. They appeared to me white—whiter than the sheet upon which I trace these words—and thin even to grotesqueness; thin with the intensity of their expression of firmness—of immovable resolution—of stern contempt of human torture. I saw that the decrees of what to me was Fate were still issuing from those lips. I saw them writhe with a deadly locution. I saw them fashion the syllables of my name; and I shuddered because

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no sound succeeded. I saw, too, for a few moments of delirious horrors, the soft and nearly imperceptible waving of the sable draperies which enwrapped the walls of the apartment. And then my vision fell upon the seven tall candles upon the table. At first they wore the aspect of charity, and seemed white slender angels who would save me; but then, all at once, there came a most deadly nausea over my spirit, and I felt every fibre in my frame thrill as if I had touched the wire of a galvanic battery, while the angel forms became meaningless spectres with heads of flame, and I saw that from them there would be no help. And then there stole into my fancy, like a rich musical note, the thought of what sweet rest there must be in the grave. The thought came gently and stealthily, and it seemed long before it attained full appreciation; but, just as my spirit came at length properly to feel and entertain it, the figures of the judges vanished, as if magically, from before me; the tall candles sank into nothingness; their flames went out utterly; the blackness of darkness supervened; all sensations appeared swallowed up in a mad rushing descent as of the soul into Hades. Then silence, and stillness, and night were the universe.

I had swooned; but still will not say that all of consciousness was lost. What of it there remained, I will not attempt to define, or even to describe; yet all was not lost. In the deepest slumber—no! In delirium—no! In a swoon—

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no! In death—no! even in the grave all is *not* lost. Else there is no immortality for man. Arousing from the most profound of slumbers, we break the gossamer web of *some* dream. Yet in a second afterward (so frail may that web have been), we remember not that we have dreamed. In the return to life from the swoon, there are two stages; first, that of the sense of mental or spiritual; secondly, that of the sense of physical, existence. It seems probable that if, upon reaching the second stage, we could recall the impressions of the first, we should find these impressions eloquent in memories of the gulf beyond. And that gulf is—what? How at least shall we distinguish its shadows from those of the tomb? But if the impressions of what I have termed the first stage are not, at will, recalled, yet, after long interval, do they not come unbidden, while we marvel whence they came? He who has never swooned is not he who finds strange palaces and wildly familiar faces in coals that glow; is not he who beholds, floating in mid-air, the sad visions that the many may not view; is not he who ponders over the perfume of some novel flower—is not he whose brain grows bewildered with the meaning of some musical cadence which has never before arrested his attention.

Amid frequent and thoughtful endeavours to remember; amid earnest struggles to regather some token of the state of seeming nothingness into which my soul had lapsed, there have been

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moments when I dreamed of success; there have been brief, very brief, periods when I have conjured up remembrances which the lucid reason of a later epoch assures me could have had reference only to that condition of seeming unconsciousness. These shadows of memory tell, indistinctly, of tall figures that lifted and bore me in silence down—down—still down—till a hideous dizziness oppressed me at the mere idea of the interminableness of the descent. They tell, also, of a vague horror at my heart, on account of that heart's unnatural stillness. Then comes a sense of sudden motionlessness throughout all things; as if those who bore me (a ghastly train!) had outrun, in their descent, the limits of the limitless, and paused from the wearisomeness of their toil. After this I call to mind flatness and dampness; and then all is *madness*—the madness of a memory which busies itself among forbidden things.

Very suddenly there came back to my soul motion and sound—the tumultuous motion of the heart, and, in my ears, the sound of its beating. Then a pause in which all is blank. Then again sound, and motion, and touch—a tingling sensation pervading my frame. Then the mere consciousness of existence, without thought—a condition which lasted long. Then, very suddenly, *thought*, and shuddering terror, and earnest endeavour to comprehend my true state. Then a strong desire to lapse into insensibility. Then a rushing revival of soul and

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a successful effort to move. And now a full memory of the trial, of the judges, of the sable draperies, of the sentence, of the sickness, of the swoon. Then entire forgetfulness of all that followed; of all that a later day and much earnestness of endeavour have enabled me vaguely to recall.

So far, I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay upon my back, unbound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard. There I suffered it to remain for many minutes, while I strove to imagine where and *what* I could be. I longed, yet dared not to employ my vision. I dreaded the first glance at objects around me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horrible, but that I grew aghast lest there should be *nothing* to see. At length, with a wild desperation at heart, I quickly unclosed my eyes. My worst thoughts, then, were confirmed. The blackness of eternal night encompassed me. I struggled for breath. The intensity of the darkness seemed to oppress and stifle me. The atmosphere was intolerably close. I still lay quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason. I brought to mind the inquisitorial proceedings, and attempted from that point to deduce my real condition. The sentence had passed; and it appeared to me that a very long interval of time had since elapsed. Yet not for a moment did I suppose myself actually dead. Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether

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inconsistent with real existence—but where and in what state was I? The condemned to death, I knew, perished usually at the *auto-da-fés*, and one of these had been held on the very night of the day of my trial. Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months? This, I at once saw, could not be. Victims had been in immediate demand. Moreover, my dungeon, as well as all the condemned cells at Toledo, had stone floors, and light was not altogether excluded.

A fearful idea now suddenly drove the blood in torrents upon my heart, and, for a brief period, I once more relapsed into insensibility. Upon recovering, I at once started to my feet, trembling convulsively in every fibre. I thrust my arms wildly above and around me in all directions. I felt nothing; yet dreaded to move a step, lest I should be impeded by the walls of a *tomb*. Perspiration burst from every pore, and stood in cold, big beads upon my forehead. The agony of suspense grew at length intolerable, and I cautiously moved forward, with my arms extended, and my eyes straining from their sockets in the hope of catching some faint ray of light. I proceeded for many paces; but still all was blackness and vacancy. I breathed more freely. It seemed evident that mine was not, at least, the most hideous of fates.

And now, as I still continued to step cautiously onward, there came thronging upon my recollec-

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tion a thousand vague rumours of the horrors of Toledo. Of the dungeons there had been strange things narrated—fables I had always deemed them—but yet strange, and too ghastly to repeat save in a whisper. Was I left to perish of starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful, awaited me? That the result would be death, and a death of more than customary bitterness, I knew too well the character of my judges to doubt. The mode and the hour were all that occupied or distracted me.

My outstretched hands at length encountered some solid obstruction. It was a wall, seemingly of stone masonry—very smooth, slimy, and cold. I followed it up; stepping with all the careful distrust with which certain antique narratives had inspired me. This process, however, afforded me no means of ascertaining the dimensions of my dungeon, as I might make its circuit and return to the point whence I set out without being aware of the fact—so perfectly uniform seemed the wall. I therefore sought the knife, which had been in my pocket when led into the inquisitorial chamber; but it was gone; my clothes had been exchanged for a wrapper of coarse serge. I had thought of forcing the blade in some minute crevice of the masonry, so as to identify my point of departure. The difficulty, nevertheless, was but trivial; although in the disorder of my fancy it seemed at first insuperable. I tore a part of the hem

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from the robe, and placed the fragment at full length, and at right angles to the wall. In groping my way around the prison, I could not fail to encounter this rag upon completing the circuit. So, at least, I thought; but I had not counted upon the extent of the dungeon, or upon my own weakness. The ground was moist and slippery. I staggered onward for some time, when I stumbled and fell. My excessive fatigue induced me to remain prostrate; and sleep soon overtook me as I lay.

Upon awaking, and stretching forth an arm, I found beside me a loaf and a pitcher of water. I was too much exhausted to reflect upon this circumstance, but ate and drank with avidity. Shortly afterward I resumed my tour around the prison, and, with much toil, came at last upon the fragment of the serge. Up to the period when I fell I had counted fifty-two paces, and, upon resuming my walk, I had counted forty-eight more—when I arrived at the rag. There were in all, then, a hundred paces; and, admitting two paces to the yard, I presumed the dungeon to be fifty yards in circuit. I had met, however, with many angles in the wall, and thus I could form no guess at the shape of the vault, for vault I could not help supposing it to be.

I had little object—certainly no hope—in these researches; but a vague curiosity prompted me to continue them. Quitting the wall, I resolved to cross the area of the enclosure.

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At first I proceeded with extreme caution, for the floor, although seemingly of solid material, was treacherous with slime. At length, however, I took courage, and did not hesitate to step firmly—endeavouring to cross in as direct a line as possible. I had advanced some ten or twelve paces in this manner, when the remnant of the torn hem of my robe became entangled between my legs. I stepped on it, and fell violently on my face.

In the confusion attending my fall I did not immediately apprehend a somewhat startling circumstance which yet, in a few seconds afterward, and while I still lay prostrate, arrested my attention. It was this: my chin rested upon the floor of the prison, but my lips and the upper portion of my head, although seemingly at a less elevation than the chin, touched nothing. At the same time my forehead seemed bathed in a clammy vapour, and the peculiar smell of decayed fungus arose to my nostrils. I put forward my arm, and shuddered to find that I had fallen at the very brink of a circular pit, whose extent, of course, I had no means of ascertaining at the moment. Groping about the masonry just below the margin, I succeeded in dislodging a small fragment, and let it fall into the abyss. For many seconds I harkened to its reverberations as it dashed against the sides of the chasm in its descent: at length there was a sudden plunge into water, succeeded by loud echoes. At the same moment there came

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a sound resembling the quick opening, and as rapid closing, of a door overhead, while a faint gleam of light flashed suddenly through the gloom, and as suddenly faded away.

I saw clearly the doom which had been prepared for me, and congratulated myself upon the timely accident by which I had escaped. Another step before my fall, and the world had seen me no more. And the death just avoided was of that very character which I had regarded as fabulous and frivolous in the tales respecting the Inquisition. To the victims of its tyranny, there was the choice of death with its direst physical agonies, or death with its most hideous moral horrors. I had been reserved for the latter. By long suffering my nerves had been unstrung, until I trembled at the sound of my own voice, and had become in every respect a fitting subject for the species of torture which awaited me.

Shaking in every limb, I groped my way back to the wall—resolving there to perish rather than risk the **terror** of the wells, of which my imagination now pictured many in various positions about the dungeon. In other conditions of mind I might have had courage to end my misery at once, by a plunge into one of these abysses; but now I was the veriest of cowards. Neither could I forget what I had read of these pits—that the *sudden* extinction of life formed no part of their most horrible plan.

Agitation of the spirit kept me awake for

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many long hours; but at length I again slumbered. Upon arousing I found by my side, as before, a loaf and a pitcher of water. A burning thirst consumed me, and I emptied the vessel at a draught. It must have been drugged—for scarcely had I drunk before I became irresistibly drowsy. A deep sleep fell upon me—a sleep like that of death. How long it lasted of course I know not; but when once again I unclosed my eyes, the objects around me were visible. By a wild, sulphurous lustre, the origin of which I could not at first determine, I was enabled to see the extent and aspect of the prison.

In its size I had been greatly mistaken. The whole circuit of its walls did not exceed twenty-five yards. For some minutes this fact occasioned me a world of vain trouble; vain indeed—for what could be of less importance, under the terrible circumstances which environed me, than the mere dimensions of my dungeon! But my soul took a wild interest in trifles, and I busied myself in endeavouring to account for the error I had committed in my measurement. The truth at length flashed upon me. In my first attempt at exploration I had counted fifty-two paces up to the period when I fell: I must then have been within a pace or two of the fragment of serge; in fact, I had nearly performed the circuit of the vault. I then slept—and, upon awaking, I must have returned upon my steps—thus supposing the circuit nearly

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double what it actually was. My confusion of mind prevented me from observing that I began my tour with the wall to the left, and ended it with the wall to the right.

I had been deceived, too, in respect to the shape of the enclosure. In feeling my way I had found many angles, and thus deduced an idea of great irregularity; so potent is the effect of total darkness upon one arousing from lethargy or sleep! The angles were simply those of a few slight depressions, or niches, at odd intervals. The general shape of the prison was square. What I had taken for masonry seemed now to be iron, or some other metal, in huge plates, whose sutures or joints occasioned the depression. The entire surface of this metallic enclosure was rudely daubed in all the hideous and repulsive devices to which the charnel superstition of the monks had given rise. The figures of fiends in aspects of menace, with skeleton forms, and other more really fearful images, overspread and disfigured the walls. I observed that the outlines of these monstrosities were sufficiently distinct, but that the colours seemed faded and blurred, as if from the effects of a damp atmosphere. I now noticed the floor, too, which was of stone. In the centre yawned the circular pit from whose jaws I had escaped; but it was the only one in the dungeon.

All this I saw indistinctly and by much effort —for my personal condition had been greatly changed during slumber. I now lay upon my

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back, and at full length, on a species of low framework of wood. To this I was securely bound by a long strap resembling a surcingle. It passed in many convolutions about my limbs and body, leaving at liberty only my head, and my left arm to such extent that I could, by dint of much exertion, supply myself with food from an earthen dish which lay by my side on the floor. I saw, to my horror, that the pitcher had been removed. I say to my horror—for I was consumed with intolerable thirst. This thirst it appeared to be the design of my persecutors to stimulate—for the food in the dish was meat pungently seasoned.

Looking upward, I surveyed the ceiling of my prison. It was some thirty or forty feet overhead, and constructed much as the side walls. In one of its panels a very singular figure riveted my whole attention. It was the painted figure of Time as he is commonly represented, save that, in lieu of a scythe, he held what, at a casual glance, I supposed to be the pictured image of a huge pendulum, such as we see on antique clocks. There was something, however, in the appearance of this machine which caused me to regard it more attentively. While I gazed directly upward at it (for its position was immediately over my own), I fancied that I saw it in motion. In an instant afterwards the fancy was confirmed. Its sweep was brief and, of course, slow. I watched it for some minutes, somewhat in fear, but more

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in wonder. Wearied at length with observing its dull movement, I turned my eyes upon the other objects in the cell.

A slight noise attracted my notice, and, looking to the floor, I saw several enormous rats traversing it. They had issued from the well, which lay just within view to my right. Even then, while I gazed, they came up in troops, hurriedly, with ravenous eyes, allured by the scent of the meat. From this it required much effort and attention to scare them away.

It might have been half an hour, perhaps even an hour (for I could take but imperfect note of time), before I again cast my eyes upward. What I then saw confounded and amazed me. The sweep of the pendulum had increased in extent by nearly a yard. As a natural consequence, its velocity was also much greater. But what mainly disturbed me was the idea that it had perceptibly *descended*. I now observed—with what horror it is needless to say—that its nether extremity was formed of a crescent of glittering steel, about a foot in length from horn to horn; the horns upward, and the under edge evidently as keen as that of a razor. Like a razor also it seemed massy and heavy, tapering from the edge into a solid and broad structure above. It was appended to a weighty rod of brass, and the whole *hissed* as it swung through the air.

I could no longer doubt the doom prepared for me by monkish ingenuity in torture. My

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cognisance of the pit had become known to the inquisitorial agents—*the pit*, whose horrors had been destined for so bold a recusant as myself—*the pit*, typical of hell and regarded by rumour as the Ultima Thule of all their punishments. The plunge into this pit I had avoided by the merest of accidents, and I knew that surprise, or entrapment into torment, formed an important portion of all the grotesquerie of these dungeon deaths. Having failed to fall, it was no part of the demon-plan to hurl me into the abyss; and thus (there being no alternative) a different and a milder destruction awaited me. Milder! I half smiled in my agony as I thought of such application of such a term.

What boots it to tell of the long, long hours of horror more than mortal, during which I counted the rushing oscillations of the steel! Inch by inch—line by line—with a descent only appreciable at intervals that seemed ages—down and still down it came! Days passed—it might have been that many days passed—ere it swept so closely over me as to fan me with its acrid breath. The odour of the sharp steel forced itself into my nostrils. I prayed—I wearied heaven with my prayer for its more speedy descent. I grew frantically mad, and struggled to force myself upward against the sweep of the fearful scimitar. And then I fell suddenly calm, and lay smiling at the glittering death, as a child at some rare bauble.

There was another interval of utter insensi-

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bility; it was brief; for, upon again lapsing into life, there had been no perceptible descent in the pendulum. But it might have been long—for I knew there were demons who took note of my swoon, and who could have arrested the vibration at pleasure. Upon my recovery, too, I felt very—oh, inexpressibly!—sick and weak, as if through long inanition. Even amid the agonies of that period, the human nature craved food. With painful effort I outstretched my left arm as far as my bonds permitted, and took possession of the small remnant which had been spared me by the rats. As I put a portion of it within my lips, there rushed to my mind a half-formed thought of joy—of hope. Yet what business had I with hope? It was, as I say, a half-formed thought—man has many such, which are never completed. I felt that it was of joy—of hope; but I felt also that it had perished in its formation. In vain I struggled to perfect—to regain it. Long suffering had nearly annihilated all my ordinary powers of mind. I was an imbecile—an idiot.

The vibration of the pendulum was at right angles to my length. I saw that the crescent was designed to cross the region of the heart. It would fray the serge of my robe—it would return and repeat its operations—again—and again. Notwithstanding its terrifically wide sweep (some thirty feet or more), and the hissing vigour of its descent, sufficient to sunder these very walls of iron, still the fraying of my

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robe would be all that, for several minutes, it would accomplish. And at this thought I paused. I dared not go farther than this reflection. I dwelt upon it with a pertinacity of attention—as if, in so dwelling, I could arrest *here* the descent of the steel. I forced myself to ponder upon the sound of the crescent as it should pass across the garment—upon the peculiar thrilling sensation which the friction of cloth produces on the nerves. I pondered upon all this frivolity until my teeth were on edge.

Down—steadily down—it crept. I took a frenzied pleasure in contrasting its downward with its lateral velocity. To the right—to the left—far and wide—with the shriek of a damned spirit! to my heart, with the stealthy pace of the tiger! I alternately laughed and howled, as the one or the other idea grew predominant.

Down—certainly, relentlessly down! It vibrated within three inches of my bosom! I struggled violently—furiously—to free my left arm. This was free only from the elbow to the hand. I could reach the latter from the platter beside me to my mouth, with great effort, but no farther. Could I have broken the fastenings above the elbow, I would have seized and attempted to arrest the pendulum. I might as well have attempted to arrest an avalanche!

Down—still unceasingly—still inevitably down. I gasped and struggled at each vibration. I shrank convulsively at its every sweep. My

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eyes followed its outward or upward whirls with the eagerness of the most unmeaning despair; they closed themselves spasmodically at the descent, although death would have been a relief, oh, how unspeakable! Still I quivered in every nerve to think how slight a sinking of the machinery would precipitate that keen, glistening axe upon my bosom. It was *hope* that prompted the nerve to quiver—the frame to shrink. It was *hope*—the hope that triumphs on the rack—that whispers to the death-condemned even in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

I saw that some ten or twelve vibrations would bring the steel in actual contact with my robe—and, with this observation, there suddenly came over my spirit all the keen, collected calmness of despair. For the first time during many hours—or perhaps days—I *thought*. It now occurred to me that the bandage, or surcingle, which enveloped me, was *unique*. I was tied by no separate cord. The first stroke of the razor-like crescent athwart any portion of the band would so detach it that it might be unwound from my person by means of my left hand. But how fearful, in that case, the proximity of the steel! The result of the slightest struggle, how deadly! Was it likely, moreover, that the minions of the torturer had not foreseen and provided for this possibility? Was it probable that the bandage crossed my bosom in the track of the pendulum? Dreading

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to find my faint, and, as it seemed, my last, hope frustrated, I so far elevated my head as to obtain a distinct view of my breast. The surcingle enveloped my limbs and body close in all directions—*save in the path of the destroying crescent.*

Scarcely had I dropped my head back into its original position, when there flashed upon my mind what I cannot better describe than as the unformed half of that idea of deliverance to which I have previously alluded, and of which a moiety only floated indeterminately through my brain when I raised food to my burning lips. The whole thought was now present—feeble, scarcely sane, scarcely definite—but still entire. I proceeded at once, with the nervous energy of despair, to attempt its execution.

For many hours the immediate vicinity of the low framework upon which I lay had been literally swarming with rats. They were wild, bold, ravenous—their red eyes glaring upon me as if they waited but for motionlessness on my part to make me their prey. “To what food,” I thought, “have they been accustomed in the well?”

They had devoured, in spite of all my efforts to prevent them, all but a small remnant of the contents of the dish. I had fallen into an habitual see-saw, or wave of the hand about the platter; and at length the unconscious uniformity of the movement deprived it of effect. In their voracity the vermin frequently fastened

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their sharp fangs in my fingers. With the particles of the oily and spicy viand which now remained I thoroughly rubbed the bandage wherever I could reach it; then, raising my hand from the floor, I lay breathlessly still.

At first the ravenous animals were startled and terrified at the change—at the cessation of movement. They shrank alarmedly back; many sought the well. But this was only for a moment. I had not counted in vain upon their voracity. Observing that I remained without motion, one or two of the boldest leaped upon the framework and smelt at the surcircle. This seemed the signal for a general rush. Forth from the well they hurried in fresh troops. They clung to the wood—they overran it, and leaped in hundreds upon my person. The measured movement of the pendulum disturbed them not at all. Avoiding its strokes, they busied themselves with the anointed bandage. They pressed—they swarmed upon me in ever accumulating heaps. They writhed upon my throat; their cold lips sought my own; I was half stifled by their thronging pressure; disgust for which the world has no name swelled my bosom, and chilled, with a heavy clamminess, my heart. Yet one minute, and I felt that the struggle would be over. Plainly I perceived the loosening of the bandage. I knew that, in more than one place, it must be already severed. With a more than human resolution I lay *still*.

Nor had I erred in my calculations—nor had

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I endured in vain. I at length felt that I was free. The surcingle hung in ribbons from my body. But the stroke of the pendulum already pressed upon my bosom. It had divided the serge of the robe. It had cut through the linen beneath. Twice again it swung, and a sharp sense of pain shot through every nerve. But the moment of escape had arrived. At a wave of my hand my deliverers hurried tumultuously away. With a steady movement—cautious, sidelong, shrinking, and slow—I slid from the embrace of the bandage and beyond the reach of the scimitar. For the moment, at least, *I was free.*

Free!—and in the grasp of the Inquisition! I had scarcely stepped from my wooden bed of horror upon the stone floor of the prison when the motion of the hellish machine ceased, and I beheld it drawn up, by some invisible force, through the ceiling. My every motion was undoubtedly watched. Free!—I had but escaped death in one form of agony, to be delivered unto worse than death in some other. With that thought I rolled my eyes nervously around on the barriers of iron that hemmed me in. Something unusual—some change which, at first, I could not appreciate distinctly—it was obvious had taken place in the apartment. For many minutes of a dreamy and trembling abstraction I busied myself in vain, unconnected conjecture. During this period I became aware, for the first time, of the origin of the

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sulphurous light which illumined the cell. It proceeded from a fissure, about half an inch in width, extending entirely around the prison at the base of the walls, which thus appeared, and were, completely separated from the floor. I endeavoured, but of course in vain, to look through the aperture.

As I arose from the attempt the mystery of the alteration in the chamber broke at once upon my understanding. I have observed that, although the outlines of the figures upon the walls were sufficiently distinct, yet the colours seemed blurred and indefinite. These colours had assumed, and were momentarily assuming, a startling and most intense brilliancy, that gave to the spectral and fiendish portraiture an aspect that might have thrilled even firmer nerves than my own. Demon eyes, of a wild and ghastly vivacity, glared upon me in a thousand directions, where none had been visible before, and gleamed with the lurid lustre of a fire that I could not force my imagination to regard as unreal.

*Unreal!*—Even while I breathed there came to my nostrils the breath of the vapour of heated iron! A suffocating odour pervaded the prison! A deeper glow settled each moment in the eyes that glared at my agonies! A richer tint of crimson diffused itself over the pictured horrors of blood. I panted! I gasped for breath! There could be no doubt of the design of my tormentors—oh! most unrelenting! oh! most demoniac of

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men! I shrank from the glowing metal to the centre of the cell. Amid the thought of the fiery destruction that impended, the idea of the coolness of the well came over my soul like balm. I rushed to its deadly brink. I threw my straining vision below. The glare from the enkindled roof illumined its inmost recesses. Yet for a wild moment did my spirit refuse to comprehend the meaning of what I saw. At length it forced—it wrestled its way into my soul—it burned itself in upon my shuddering reason. Oh! for a voice to speak!—oh! horror!—oh! any horror but this! With a shriek I rushed from the margin, and buried my face in my hands—weeping bitterly.

The heat rapidly increased, and once again I looked up, shuddering as with a fit of the ague. There had been a second change in the cell—and now the change was obviously in the *form*. As before, it was in vain that I at first endeavoured to appreciate or understand what was taking place. But not long was I left in doubt. The Inquisitorial vengeance had been hurried by my two-fold escape, and there was to be no more dallying with the King of Terrors. The room had been square. I saw that two of its iron angles were now acute—two, consequently, obtuse. The fearful difference quickly increased with a low rumbling or moaning sound. In an instant the apartment had shifted its form into that of a lozenge. But the alteration stopped not here—I neither hoped nor desired

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it would stop. I could have clasped the red walls to my bosom as a garment of eternal peace. "Death," I said, "any death but that of the pit!" Fool! might I not have known that *into the pit* it was the object of the burning iron to urge me? Could I resist its glows? or if even that, could I withstand its pressure? And now, flatter and flatter grew the lozenge, with a rapidity that left me no time for contemplation. Its centre, and of course its greatest width, came just over the yawning gulf. I shrank back—but the closing walls pressed me resistlessly onward. At length for my seared and writhing body there was no longer an inch of foothold on the firm floor of the prison. I struggled no more, but the agony of my soul found vent in one loud, long, and final scream of despair. I felt that I tottered upon the brink—I averted my eyes—

There was a discordant hum of human voices! There was a loud blast as of many trumpets! There was a harsh grating as of a thousand thunders! The fiery walls rushed back! An outstretched arm caught my own as I fell, fainting, into the abyss. It was that of General Lasalle. The French army had entered Toledo. The Inquisition was in the hands of its enemies!





RUDYARD KIPLING

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EDITED BY  
HAMILTON W. MABIE



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# THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING\*

BY

RUDYARD KIPLING

THE Law, as quoted, lays down a fair conduct of life, and one not easy to follow. I have been fellow to a beggar again and again under circumstances which prevented either of us finding out whether the other was worthy. I have still to be brother to a Prince, though I once came near to kinship with what might have been a veritable King and was promised the reversion of a Kingdom — army, law-courts, revenue and policy all complete. But, to-day, I greatly fear that my King is dead, and if I want a crown I must go and hunt it for myself.

The beginning of everything was in a railway train upon the road to Mhow from Ajmir. There had been a deficit in the Budget, which necessitated travelling, not Second-class, which is only half as dear as First-class, but by Intermediate, which is very awful indeed. There are no cushions in the Intermediate class, and the population are either Intermediate, which is Eurasian, or native, which for a long night journey is nasty; or Loafer, which is amusing though intoxicated. Intermediates do not patronise refreshment rooms. They carry their

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food in bundles and pots, and buy sweets from the native sweetmeat-sellers, and drink the road side water. That is why in the hot weather Intermediates are taken out of the carriages dead, and in all weathers are most properly looked down upon.

My particular Intermediate happened to be empty till I reached Nasirabad, when a huge gentleman in shirt-sleeves entered, and, following the custom of Intermediates, passed the time of day. He was a wanderer and a vagabond like myself, but with an educated taste for whisky. He told tales of things he had seen and done, of out-of-the-way corners of the Empire into which he had penetrated, and of adventures in which he risked his life for a few days' food. "If India was filled with men like you and me, not knowing more than the crows where they'd get their next day's rations, it isn't seventy millions of revenue the land would be paying—it's seven hundred million," said he; and as I looked at his mouth and chin I was disposed to agree with him. We talked politics—the politics of Loaferdom that sees things from the underside where the lath and plaster is not smoothed off—and we talked postal arrangements because my friend wanted to send a telegram back from the next station to Ajmir, which is the turning-off place from the Bombay to the Mhow line as you travel westward. My friend had no money beyond eight annas which he wanted for dinner, and I had no money

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at all, owing to the hitch in the Budget before mentioned. Further, I was going into a wilderness where, though I should resume touch with the Treasury, there were no telegraph offices. I was, therefore, unable to help him in any way.

"We might threaten a Station-master, and make him send a wire on tick," said my friend, "but that'd mean inquiries for you and for me, and I've got my hands full these days. Did you say you are travelling back along this line within any days?"

"Within ten," I said.

"Can't you make it eight?" said he. "Mine is rather urgent business."

"I can send your telegram within ten days if that will serve you," I said.

"I couldn't trust the wire to fetch him now I think of it. It's this way. He leaves Delhi on the 23d for Bombay. That means he'll be running through Ajmir about the night of the 23d."

"But I'm going into the Indian Desert," I explained.

"Well *and* good," said he. "You'll be changing at Marwar Junction to get into Jodhpore territory—you must do that—and he'll be coming through Marwar Junction in the early morning of the 24th by the Bombay Mail. Can you be at Marwar Junction on that time? 'Twon't be inconveniencing you because I know that there's precious few pickings to be

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got out of these Central India States—even though you pretend to be correspondent of the *Backwoodsman*."

"Have you ever tried that trick?" I asked.

"Again and again, but the Residents find you out, and then you get escorted to the Border before you've time to get your knife into them. But about my friend here. I *must* give him a word o' mouth to tell him what's come to me or else he won't know where to go. I would take it more than kind of you if you was to come out of Central India in time to catch him at Marwar Junction, and say to him—'He has gone South for the week.' He'll know what that means. He's a big man with a red beard, and a great swell he is. You'll find him sleeping like a gentleman with all his luggage round him in a second-class compartment. But don't you be afraid. Slip down the window, and say—'He has gone South for the week,' and he'll tumble. It's only cutting your time of stay in those parts by two days. I ask you as a stranger—going to the West," he said with emphasis.

"Where have *you* come from?" said I.

"From the East," said he, "and I am hoping that you will give him the message on the Square—for the sake of my Mother as well as your own."

Englishmen are not usually softened by appeals to the memory of their mothers, but for certain reasons, which will be fully apparent, I saw fit to agree.

## The Man Who Would Be King

"It's more than a little matter," said he, "and that's why I ask you to do it—and now I know that I can depend on you doing it. A second-class carriage at Marwar Junction, and a red-haired man asleep in it. You'll be sure to remember. I get out at the next station, and I must hold on there till he comes or sends me what I want."

"I'll give the message if I catch him," I said, "and for the sake of your Mother as well as mine I'll give you a word of advice. Don't try to run the Central India States just now as the correspondent of the *Backwoodsman*. There's a real one knocking about here, and it might lead to trouble."

"Thank you," said he simply, "and when will the swine be gone? I can't starve because he's ruining my work. - I wanted to get hold of the Degumber Rajah down here about his father's widow, and give him a jump."

"What did he do to his father's widow, then?"

"Filled her up with red pepper and slipped her to death as she hung from a beam. I found that out myself and I'm the only man that would dare going into the State to get hush-money for it. They'll try to poison me, same as they did in Chortumna when I went on the loot there. But you'll give the man at Marwar Junction my message?"

He got out at a little roadside station, and I reflected. I had heard, more than once, of men personating correspondents of newspapers

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and bleeding small Native States with threats of exposure, but I had never met any of the caste before. They lead a hard life, and generally die with great suddenness. The Native States have a wholesome horror of English newspapers, which may throw light on their peculiar methods of government, and do their best to choke correspondents with champagne, or drive them out of their mind with four-in-hand barouches. They do not understand that nobody cares a straw for the internal administration of Native States so long as oppression and crime are kept within decent limits, and the ruler is not drugged, drunk, or diseased from one end of the year to the other. Native States were created by Providence in order to supply picturesque scenery, tigers and tall-writing. They are the dark places of the earth, full of unimaginable cruelty, touching the Railway and the Telegraph on one side, and, on the other, the days of Harun-al-Raschid. When I left the train I did business with divers Kings, and in eight days passed through many changes of life. Sometimes I wore dress-clothes and consortied with Princes and Politicals, drinking from crystal and eating from silver. Sometimes I lay out upon the ground and devoured what I could get, from a plate made of a flapjack, and drank the running water, and slept under the same rug as my servant. It was all in a day's work.

Then I headed for the Great Indian Desert

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upon the proper date, as I had promised, and the night Mail set me down at Marwar Junction, where a funny little, happy-go-lucky, native managed railway runs to Jodhpore. The Bombay Mail from Delhi makes a short halt at Marwar. She arrived as I got in, and I had just time to hurry to her platform and go down the carriages. There was only one second-class on the train. I slipped the window and looked down upon a flaming red beard, half covered by a railway rug. That was my man, fast asleep, and I dug him gently in the ribs. He woke with a grunt and I saw his face in the light of the lamps. It was a great and shining face.

"Tickets again?" said he.

"No," said I. "I am to tell you that he is gone South for the week. He is gone South for the week!"

The train had begun to move out. The red man rubbed his eyes. "He has gone South for the week," he repeated. "Now that's just like his impudence. Did he say that I was to give you anything? 'Cause I won't."

"He didn't," I said and dropped away, and watched the red lights die out in the dark. It was horribly cold because the wind was blowing off the sands. I climbed into my own train—not an Intermediate Carriage this time—and went to sleep.

If the man with the beard had given me a rupee I should have kept it as a memento of

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a rather curious affair. But the consciousness of having done my duty was my only reward.

Later on I reflected that two gentlemen like my friends could not do any good if they foregathered and personated correspondents of newspapers, and might, if they "stuck up" one of the little rat-trap states of Central India or Southern Rajputana, get themselves into serious difficulties. I therefore took some trouble to describe them as accurately as I could remember to people who would be interested in deporting them; and succeeded, so I was later informed, in having them headed back from the Degumber borders.

Then I became respectable, and returned to an Office where there were no Kings and no incidents except the daily manufacture of a newspaper. A newspaper office seems to attract every conceivable sort of person, to the prejudice of discipline. Zenana-mission ladies arrive, and beg that the Editor will instantly abandon all his duties to describe a Christian prize-giving in a back-slum of a perfectly inaccessible village; Colonels who have been overpassed for commands sit down and sketch the outline of a series of ten, twelve, or twenty-four leading articles on Seniority *versus* Selection; missionaries wish to know why they have not been permitted to escape from their regular vehicles of abuse and swear at a brother-missionary under special patronage of the editorial We; stranded theatrical companies troop up to explain that they cannot

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pay for their advertisements, but on their return from New Zealand or Tahiti will do so with interest; inventors of patent punkah-pulling machines, carriage couplings and unbreakable swords and axle-trees call with specifications in their pockets and hours at their disposal; tea-companies enter and elaborate their prospectuses with the office pens; secretaries of ball-committees clamour to have the glories of their last dance more fully expounded; strange ladies rustle in and say:—"I want a hundred lady's cards printed *at once*, please," which is manifestly part of an Editor's duty; and every dissolute ruffian that ever tramped the Grand Trunk Road makes it his business to ask for employment as a proof-reader. And, all the time, the telephone-bell is ringing madly, and Kings are being killed on the Continent, and Empires are saying, "You're another," and Mister Gladstone is calling down brimstone upon the British Dominions, and the little black copy-boys are whining, "*kaa-pi chayha-yeh*" (copy wanted) like tired bees, and most of the paper is as blank as Modred's shield.

But that is the amusing part of the year. There are other six months wherein none ever come to call, and the thermometer walks inch by inch up to the top of the glass, and the office is darkened to just above reading light, and the press machines are red-hot of touch, and nobody writes anything but accounts of amusements in the Hill-stations or obituary notices. Then the telephone becomes a tinkling terror, because it

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tells you of the sudden deaths of men and women that you knew intimately, and the prickly-heat covers you as with a garment, and you sit down and write:—"A slight increase of sickness is reported from the Khuda Janta Khan district. The outbreak is purely sporadic in its nature, and, thanks to the energetic efforts of the District authorities, is now almost at an end. It is, however, with deep regret we record the death, etc."

Then the sickness really breaks out, and the less recording and reporting the better for the peace of the subscribers. But the Empires and the Kings continue to divert themselves as selfishly as before, and the foreman thinks that a daily paper really ought to come out once in twenty-four hours, and all the people at the Hill-stations in the middle of their amusements say:—"Good gracious! Why can't the paper be sparkling? I'm sure there's plenty going on up here."

That is the dark half of the moon, and, as the advertisements say, "must be experienced to be appreciated."

It was in that season, and a remarkably evil season, that the paper began running the last issue of the week on Saturday night, which is to say Sunday morning, after the custom of a London paper. This was a great convenience, for immediately after the paper was put to bed, the dawn would lower the thermometer from 96° to almost 84° for almost half an hour, and in

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that chill—you have no idea how cold is 84° on the grass until you begin to pray for it—a very tired man could set off to sleep ere the heat roused him.

One Saturday night it was my pleasant duty to put the paper to bed alone. A King or courtier or a courtesan or a community was going to die or get a new Constitution, or do something that was important on the other side of the world, and the paper was to be held open till the latest possible minute in order to catch the telegram. It was a pitchy black night, as stifling as a June night can be, and the *loo*, the red-hot wind from the westward, was booming among the tinder-dry trees and pretending that the rain was on its heels. Now and again a spot of almost boiling water would fall on the dust with the flop of a frog, but all our weary world knew that was only pretence. It was a shade cooler in the press-room than the office, so I sat there, while the type ticked and clicked and the night-jars hooted at the windows, and the all but naked compositors wiped the sweat from their foreheads and called for water. The thing that was keeping us back, whatever it was, would not come off, though the *loo* dropped and the last type was set, and the whole round earth stood still in the choking heat, with its finger on its lip, to wait the event. I drowsed, and wondered whether the telegraph was a blessing, and whether this dying man, or struggling people, was aware of the inconvenience the delay

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was causing. There was no special reason beyond the heat and worry to make tension, but as the clock-hands crept up to three o'clock and the machines spun their fly-wheels two and three times to see that all was in order, before I said the word that would set them off, I could have shrieked aloud.

Then the roar and rattle of the wheels shivered the quiet into little bits. I rose to go away, but two men in white clothes stood in front of me. The first one said: "It's him!" The second said: "So it is!" And they both laughed almost as loudly as the machinery roared, and mopped their foreheads. "We see there was a light burning across the road and we were sleeping in that ditch there for coolness, and I said to my friend here, "The office is open. Let's come along and speak to him as turned us back from the Degumber State," said the smaller of the two. He was the man I had met in the Mhow train, and his fellow was the red-bearded man of Marwar Junction. There was no mistaking the eyebrows of the one or the beard of the other.

I was not pleased, because I wished to go to sleep, not to squabble with loafers. "What do you want?" I asked.

"Half an hour's talk with you cool and comfortable, in the office," said the red-bearded man. "We'd like some drink—the Contrack doesn't begin yet, Peachey, so you needn't look—but what we really want is advice. We

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don't want money. We ask you as a favour because you did us a bad turn about Degumber."

I led from the press-room to the stifling office with the maps on the walls, and the red-haired man rubbed his hands. "That's something like," said he. "This was the proper shop to come to. Now, Sir, let me introduce to you Brother Peachey Carnehan, that's him, and Brother Daniel Dravot, that is *me*, and the less said about our professions the better, for we have been most things in our time. Soldier, sailor, compositor, photographer, proof-reader, street-preacher, and correspondents of the *Backwoodsman* when we thought the paper wanted one. Carnehan is sober, and so am I. Look at us first and see that's sure. It will save you cutting into my talk. We'll take one of your cigars apiece, and you shall see us light."

I watched the test. The men were absolutely sober, so I gave them each a tepid peg.

"Well and good," said Carnehan of the eyebrows, wiping the froth from his moustache. "Let me talk now, Dan. We have been all over India, mostly on foot. We have been boiler-fitters, engine-drivers, petty contractors, and all that, and we have decided that India isn't big enough for such as us."

They certainly were too big for the office. Dravot's beard seemed to fill half the room and Carnehan's shoulders the other half, as they sat on the big table. Carnehan continued:— "The country isn't half worked out because

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they that governs it won't let you touch it. They spend all their blessed time in governing it, and you can't lift a spade, nor chip a rock, nor look for oil, nor anything like that without all the Government saying—'Leave it alone and let us govern.' Therefore, such as it is, we will let it alone, and go away to some other place where a man isn't crowded and can come to his own. We are not little men, and there is nothing that we are afraid of except Drink, and we have signed a Contrack on that. *Therefore.* we are going away to be Kings."

"Kings in our own right," muttered Dravot.

"Yes, of course," I said. "You've been tramping in the sun, and it's a very warm night, and hadn't you better sleep over the notion? Come to-morrow."

"Neither drunk nor sunstruck," said Dravot. "We have slept over the notion half a year, and require to see Books and Atlases, and we have decided that there is only one place now in the world that two strong men can Sar-a-whack. They call it Kafiristan. By my reckoning its the top right-hand corner of Afghanistan, not more than three hundred miles from Peshawar. They have two and thirty heathen idols there, and we'll be the thirty-third. It's a mountainous country, and the women of those parts are very beautiful."

"But that is provided against in the Contrack," said Carnehan. "Neither Women nor Liqu-or, Daniel."

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"And that's all we know, except that no one has gone there, and they fight, and in any place where they fight a man who knows how to drill men can always be a King. We shall go to those parts and say to any King we find—'D'you want to vanquish your foes?' and we will show him how to drill men; for that we know better than anything else. Then we will subvert that King and seize his Throne and establish a Dy-nasty."

"You'll be cut to pieces before you're fifty miles across the Border," I said. "You have to travel through Afghanistan to get to that country. It's one mass of mountains and peaks and glaciers, and no Englishman has been through it. The people are utter brutes, and even if you reached them you couldn't do anything."

"That's more like," said Carnehan. "If you could think us a little more mad we would be more pleased. We have come to you to know about this country, to read a book about it, and to be shown maps. We want you to tell us that we are fools and to show us your books." He turned to the book-cases.

"Are you at all in earnest?" I said.

"A little," said Dravot, sweetly. "As big a map as you have got, even if it's all blank where Kafiristan is, and any books you've got. We can read, though we aren't very educated."

I uncased the big thirty two-miles-to-the-inch map of India, and two smaller Frontier maps,

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hauled down volume INF-KAN of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and the men consulted them.

"See here!" said Dravot, his thumb on the map. "Up to Jagdallak, Peachey and me know the road. We was there with Roberts's Army. We'll have to turn off to the right at Jagdallak through Laghmann territory. Then we get among the hills—fourteen thousand feet —fifteen thousand—it will be cold work there, but it don't look very far on the map."

I handed him Wood on the *Sources of the Oxus*. Carnehan was deep in the *Encyclopædia*.

"They're a mixed lot," said Dravot, reflectively; "and it won't help us to know the names of their tribes. The more tribes the more they'll fight, and the better for us. From Jagdallak to Ashang. H'mm!"

"But all the information about the country is as sketchy and inaccurate as can be," I protested. "No one knows anything about it really. Here's the file of the *United Services' Institute*. Read what Bellew says."

"Blow Bellew!" said Carnehan. "Dan, they're an all-fired lot of heathens, but this book here says they think they're related to us English."

I smoked while the men pored over *Raverty*, *Wood*, the maps and the *Encyclopædia*.

"There is no use your waiting," said Dravot, politely. "It's about four o'clock now. We'll go before six o'clock if you want to sleep. and we won't steal any of the papers. Don't you sit up. We're two harmless lunatics, and if you come,

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to-morrow evening, down to the Serai we'll say good-by to you."

"You *are* two fools," I answered. "You'll be turned back at the Frontier or cut up the minute you set foot in Afghanistan. Do you want any money or a recommendation down-country? I can help you to the chance of work next week."

"Next week we shall be hard at work ourselves, thank you," said Dravot. "It isn't so easy being a King as it looks. When we've got our Kingdom in going order we'll let you know, and you can come up and help us to govern it."

"Would two lunatics make a Contrack like that?" said Carnehan, with subdued pride, showing me a greasy half-sheet of note-paper on which was written the following. I copied it, then and there, as a curiosity:—

*This Contract between me and you persuing witnesseth in the name of God—Amen and so forth.*

(One) *That me and you will settle this matter together: i.e., to be Kings of Kafiristan.*

(Two) *That you and me will not while this matter is being settled, look at any Liquor, nor any Woman black, white or brown, so as to get mixed up with one or the other harmful.*

(Three) *That we conduct ourselves with Dignity and Discretion, and if one of us gets into trouble the other will stay by him.*

*Signed by you and me this day.*

*Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan.*

*Daniel Dravot.*

*Both Gentlemen at Large.*

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"There was no need for the last article," said Carnehan, blushing modestly; "but it looks regular. Now you know the sort of men that loafers are—we *are* loafers, Dan, until we get out of India—and *do* you think that we could sign a Contrack like that unless we was in earnest? We have kept away from the two things that make life worth having."

"You won't enjoy your lives much longer if you are going to try this idiotic adventure. Don't set the office on fire," I said, "and go away before nine o'clock."

I left them still poring over the maps and making notes on the back of the "Contrack." "Be sure to come down to the Serai to-morrow," were their parting words.

The Kumharsen Serai is the great four-square sink of humanity where the strings of camels and horses from the North load and unload. All the nationalities of Central Asia may be found there, and most of the folk of India proper. Balkh and Bokhara there meet Bengal and Bombay, and try to draw eye-teeth. You can buy ponies, turquoises, Persian pussycats, saddle-bags, fat-tailed sheep, and musk in the Kumharsen Serai, and get many strange things for nothing. In the afternoon I went down there to see whether my friends intended to keep their word or were lying about drunk.

A priest attired in fragments of ribbons and rags stalked up to me, gravely twisting a child's paper whirligig. Behind him was his servant.

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bending under the load of a crate of mud toys. The two were loading up two camels, and the inhabitants of the Serai watched them with shrieks of laughter.

"The priest is mad," said a horse-dealer to me. "He is going up to Kabul to sell toys to the Amir. He will either be raised to honour or have his head cut off. He came in here this morning and has been behaving madly ever since."

"The witless are under the protection of God," stammered a flat-cheeked Usbeg in broken Hindi. "They foretell future events."

"Would they could have foretold that my caravan would have been cut up by the Shinwaris almost within shadow of the Pass!" grunted the Eusufzai agent of a Rajputana trading-house whose goods had been feloniously diverted into the hands of other robbers just across the Border, and whose misfortunes were the laughing-stock of the bazaar. "Ohé, priest, whence come you and whither do you go?"

"From Roum have I come," shouted the priest, waving his whirligig; "from Roum, blown by the breath of a hundred devils across the sea! O thieves, robbers, liars, the blessing of Pir Khan on pigs, dogs, and perjurors! Who will take the Protected of God to the North to sell charms that are never still to the Amir? The camels shall not gall, the sons shall not fall sick, and the wives shall remain faithful while they are away, of the men who give me place in

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their caravan. Who will assist me to slipper the King of the Roos with a golden slipper with a silver heel? The protection of Pir Kahn be upon his labours!" He spread out the skirts of his gaberdine and pirouetted between the lines of tethered horses.

"There starts a caravan from Peshawar to Kabul in twenty days, *Huzrut*," said the Eusufzai trader. "My camels go therewith. Do thou also go and bring us good luck."

"I will go even now!" shouted the priest. "I will depart upon my winged camels, and be at Peshawar in a day! Ho! Hazar Mir Khan," he yelled to his servant, "drive out the camels, but let me first mount my own."

He leaped on the back of his beast as it knelt, and turning round to me, cried:—

"Come thou also, Sahib, a little along the road, and I will sell thee a charm—an amulet that shall make thee King of Kafiristan."

Then the light broke upon me, and I followed the two camels out of the Serai till we reached open road and the priest halted.

"What d' you think o' that?" said he in English. "Carnehan can't talk their patter, so I've made him my servant. He makes a handsome servant. 'Tisn't for nothing that I've been knocking about the country for fourteen years. Didn't I do that talk neat? We'll hitch on to a caravan at Peshawar till we get to Jagdallak, and then we'll see if we can get donkeys for our camels, and strike into

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Kafiristan. Whirligigs for the Amir, O Lori  
Put your hand under the camel-bags and tell  
me what you feel."

I felt the butt of a Martini, and another and another.

"Twenty of 'em," said Dravot, placidly.

"Twenty of 'em, and ammunition to correspond, under the whirligigs and the mud dolls."

"Heaven help you if you are caught with those things!" I said. "A Martini is worth her weight in silver among the Pathans."

"Fifteen hundred rupees of capital—every rupee we could beg, borrow, or steal—are invested on these two camels," said Dravot. "We won't get caught. We're going through the Khaiber with a regular caravan. Who'd touch a poor mad priest?"

"Have you got everything you want?" I asked, overcome with astonishment.

"Not yet, but we shall soon. Give us a momento of your kindness, *Brother*. You did me a service yesterday, and that time in Marwar. Half my Kingdom shall you have, as the saying is." I slipped a small charm compass from my watch-chain and handed it up to the priest.

"Good-bye," said Dravot, giving me his hand cautiously. "It's the last time we'll shake hands with an Englishman these many days. Shake hands with him, Carnehan," he cried, as the second camel passed me.

Carnehan looked down and shook hands. Then the camels passed away along the dusty

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road, and I was left alone to wonder. My eye could detect no failure in the disguises. The scene in the Serai attested that they were complete to the native mind. There was just the chance, therefore, that Carnehan and Dravot would be able to wander through Afghanistan without detection. But, beyond, they would find death, certain and awful death.

Ten days later a native friend of mine, giving me the news of the day from Peshawar, wound up his letter with:—"There has been much laughter here on account of a certain mad priest who is going in his estimation to sell petty gauds and insignificant trinkets which he ascribes as great charms to H. H. the Amir of Bokhara. He passed through Peshawar and associated himself to the Second Summer caravan that goes to Kabul. The merchants are pleased because through superstition they imagine that such mad fellows bring good-fortune."

The two then, were beyond the Border. I would have prayed for them, but, that night, a real King died in Europe, and demanded an obituary notice.

The wheel of the world swings through the same phases again and again. Summer passed and winter thereafter, and came and passed again. The daily paper continued and I with it, and upon the third summer there fell a hot night, a night-issue, and a strained waiting for some-

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thing to be telegraphed from the other side of the world, exactly as had happened before. A few great men had died in the past two years, the machines worked with more clatter, and some of the trees in the Office garden were a few feet taller. But that was all the difference.

I passed over to the press-room, and went through just such a scene as I have already described. The nervous tension was stronger than it had been two years before, and I felt the heat more acutely. At three o'clock I cried, "Print off," and turned to go, when there crept to my chair what was left of a man. He was bent into a circle, his head was sunk between his shoulders, and he moved his feet one over the other like a bear. I could hardly see whether he walked or crawled—this rag-wrapped, whining cripple who addressed me by name, crying that he was come back. "Can you give me a drink?" he whimpered. "For the Lord's sake, give me a drink!"

I went back to the office, the man following with groans of pain, and I turned up the lamp.

"Don't you know me?" he gasped, dropping into a chair, and he turned his drawn face, surmounted by a shock of gray hair, to the light.

I looked at him intently. Once before had I seen eyebrows that met over the nose in an inch-broad black band, but for the life of me I could not tell where.

"I don't know you," I said, handing him the whisky. "What can I do for you?"

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He took a gulp of the spirit raw, and shivered in spite of the suffocating heat.

"I've come back," he repeated; "and I was the King of Kafiristan—me and Dravot—crowned Kings we was! In this office we settled it—you setting there and giving us the books. I am Peachey—Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan, and you've been setting here ever since—O Lord!"

I was more than a little astonished, and expressed my feelings accordingly.

"It's true," said Carnehan, with a dry cackle, nursing his feet which were wrapped in rags. "True as gospel. Kings we were, with crowns upon our heads—me and Dravot—poor Dan—oh, poor, poor Dan, that would never take advice, not though I begged of him!"

"Take the whisky," I said, "and take your own time. Tell me all you can recollect of everything from beginning to end. You got across the border on your camels, Dravot dressed as a mad priest and you his servant. Do you remember that?"

"I ain't mad—yet, but I will be that way soon. Of course I remember. Keep looking at me, or maybe my words will go all to pieces. Keep looking at me in my eyes and don't say anything."

I leaned forward and looked into his face as steadily as I could. He dropped one hand upon the table and I grasped it by the wrist. It was twisted like a bird's claw, and upon

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the back was a ragged, red, diamond-shaped scar.

"No, don't look there. Look at *me*, said Carnehan.

"That comes afterwards, but for the Lord's sake don't distract me. We left with that caravan, me and Dravot, playing all sorts of antics to amuse the people we were with. Dravot used to make us laugh in the evenings when all the people was cooking their dinners—cooking their dinners, and . . . what did they do then? They lit little fires with sparks that went into Dravot's beard, and we all laughed—fit to die. Little red fires they was, going into Dravot's big red beard—so funny." His eyes left mine and he smiled foolishly.

"You went as far as Jagdallak with that caravan," I said at a venture, "after you had lit those fires. To Jagdallak, where you turned off to try to get into Kafiristan."

"No, we didn't neither. What are you talking about? We turned off before Jagdallak, because we heard the roads was good. But they wasn't good enough for our two camels—mine and Dravot's. When we left the caravan, Dravot took off all his clothes and mine too, and said we would be heathen, because the Kafirs didn't allow Mohammedans to talk to them. So we dressed betwixt and between, and such a sight as Daniel Dravot I never saw yet nor expect to see again. He burned half his beard, and slung a sheep-skin over his shoulder, and shaved his

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head into patterns. He shaved mine, too, and made me wear outrageous things to look like a heathen. That was in a most mountainous country, and our camels couldn't go along any more because of the mountains. They were tall and black, and coming home I saw them fight like wild goats—there are lots of goats in Kafiristan. And these mountains, they never keep still, no more than the goats. Always fighting they are, and don't let you sleep at night.

"Take some more whisky," I said, very slowly. "What did you and Daniel Dravot do when the camels could go no farther because of the rough roads that led into Kafiristan?"

"What did which do?" There was a party called Peachey Taliaferro Carnehan that was with Dravot. Shall I tell you about him? He died out there in the cold. Slap from the bridge fell old Peachey, turning and twisting in the air like a penny whirligig that you can sell to the Amir—No; they was two for three ha'pence, those whirligigs, or I am much mistaken and woful sore. And then these camels were no use, and Peachey said to Dravot—"For the Lord's sake, let's get out of this before our heads are chopped off," and with that they killed the camels all among the mountains, not having anything in particular to eat, but first they took off the boxes with the guns and the ammunition, till two men came along driving four mules. Dravot up and dances in front of them, singing, 'Sell me four mules.' Says the first man,

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"If you are rich enough to buy, you are rich enough to rob;" but before ever he could put his hand to his knife, Dravot breaks his neck over his knee, and the other party runs away. So Carnehan loaded the mules with the rifles that was taken off the camels, and together we starts forward into those bitter cold mountainous parts, and never a road broader than the back of your hand."

He paused for a moment, while I asked him if he could remember the nature of the country through which he had journeyed.

"I am telling you as straight as I can, but my head isn't as good as it might be. They drove nails through it to make me hear better how Dravot died. The country was mountainous and the mules were most contrary, and the inhabitants was dispersed and solitary. They went up and up, and down and down, and that other party Carnehan, was imploring of Dravot not to sing and whistle so loud, for fear of bringing down the tremenjus avalanches. But Dravot says that if a King couldn't sing it wasn't worth being King, and whacked the mules over the rump, and never took no heed for ten cold days. We came to a big level valley all among the mountains, and the mules were near dead, so we killed them, not having anything in special for them or us to eat. We sat upon the boxes, and played odd, and even with the cartridges that was jolted out.

"Then ten men with bows and arrows ran

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down that valley, chasing twenty men with bows and arrows, and the row was tremenjus. They was fair men—fairer than you or me—with yellow hair and remarkable well built. Says Dravot, unpacking the guns—‘This is the beginning of the business. We’ll fight for the ten men,’ and with that he fires two rifles at the twenty men, and drops one of them at two hundred yards from the rock where we was sitting. The other men began to run, but Carnehan and Dravot sits on the boxes picking them off at all ranges, up and down the valley. Then we goes up to the ten men that had run across the snow too, and they fires a footy little arrow at us. Dravot he shoots above their heads and they all falls down flat. Then he walks over them and kicks them, and then he lifts them up and shakes hands all around to make them friendly like. He calls them and gives them the boxes to carry, and waves his hand for all the world as though he was King already. They takes the boxes and him across the valley and up the hill into a pine wood on the top, where there was half a dozen big stone idols. Dravot he goes to the biggest—a fellow they call Imbra—and lays a rifle and a cartridge at his feet, rubbing his nose respectful with his own nose, patting him on the head, and saluting in front of it. He turns round to the men and nods his head, and says:—‘That’s all right. I’m in the know too, and these old jim-jams are my friends.’ Then he opens his mouth and points

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down it, and when the first man brings him food, he says—'No'; and when the second man brings him food, he says—'No'; but when one of the old priests and the boss of the village brings him food, he says—'Yes'; very haughty, and eats it slow. That was how we came to our first village, without any trouble, just as though we had tumbled from the skies. But we tumbled from one of those damned rope-bridges, you see, and you couldn't expect a man to laugh much after that."

"Take some more whisky and go on," I said. "That was the first village you came into. How did you get to be King?"

"I wasn't King," said Carnehan. "Dravot he was the King, and a handsome man he looked with the gold crown on his head and all. Him and the other party stayed in that village, and every morning Dravot sat by the side of old Imbra, and the people came and worshipped. That was Dravot's order. Then a lot of men came into the valley, and Carnehan and Dravot picks them off with the rifles before they knew where they was, and runs down into the valley and up again the other side, and finds another village, same as the first one, and the people all falls down flat on their faces, and Dravot says: —'Now what is the trouble between you two villages?' and the people points to a woman, as fair as you or me, that was carried off, and Dravot takes her back to the first village and counts up the dead—eight there was. For each

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dead man Dravot pours a little milk on the ground and waves his arms like a whirligig and, 'That's all right,' says he. Then he and Carnehan takes the big boss of each village by the arm and walks them down into the valley, and shows them how to scratch a line with a spear right down the valley, and gives each a sod of turf from both sides o' the line. Then all the people comes down and shouts like the devil and all, and Dravot says, 'Go and dig the land, and be fruitful and multiply,' which they did, though they didn't understand. Then we asks the names of things in their lingo—bread and water and fire and idols and such, and Dravot leads the priest of each village up to the idol, and says he must sit there and judge the people, and if anything goes wrong he is to be shot.

"Next week they was all turning up the land in the valley as quiet as bees and much prettier, and the priests heard all the complaints and told Dravot in dumb show what it was about. 'That's just the beginning,' says Dravot. 'They think we're gods.' He and Carnehan picks out twenty good men and shows them how to click off a rifle, and form fours, and advance in line, and they was very pleased to do so, and clever to see the hang of it. Then he takes out his pipe and his baccy-pouch and leaves one at one village, and one at the other, and off we two goes to see what was to be done in the next valley. That was all rock, and there was a

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little village there, and Carnehan says, 'Send 'em to the old valley to plant,' and takes 'em there and gives 'em some land that wasn't took before. They were a poor lot, and we bled 'em with a kid before letting 'em into the new Kingdom. That was to impress the people, and then they settled down quiet, and Carnehan went back to Dravot who had got into another valley, all snow and ice and most mountainous. There was no people there and the Army got afraid, so Dravot shoots one of them, and goes on till he finds some people in a village, and the Army explains that unless the people wants to be killed they had better not shoot their little matchlocks, for they had matchlocks. We makes friends with the priest, and I stays there alone with two of the Army, teaching the men how to drill, and a thundering big Chief comes across the snow with kettledrums and horns twanging, because he heard there was a new god kicking about. Carnehan sights for the brown of the men half a mile across the snow and wings one of them. Then he sends a message to the Chief that, unless he wished to be killed, he must come and shake hands with me and leave his arms behind. The Chief comes alone first, and Carnehan shakes hands with him and whirls his arms about, same as Dravot used, and very much surprised that Chief was, and strokes my eyebrows. Then Carnehan goes alone to the Chief, and asks him in dumb show if he had an enemy he hated. 'I have,' says the

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Chief. So Carnehan weeds out the pick of his men, and sets the two of the Army to show them drill and at the end of two weeks the men can manœuvre about as well as Volunteers. So he marches with the Chief to a great big plain on the top of a mountain, and the Chief's men rushes into a village and takes it; we three Martinis firing into the brown of the enemy. So we took that village too, and I gives the Chief a rag from my coat and says, 'Occupy till I come': which was scriptural. By way of a reminder, when me and the Army was eighteen hundred yards away, I drops a bullet near him standing on the snow, and all the people falls flat on their faces. Then I sends a letter to Dravot, where he be by land or by sea."

At the risk of throwing the creature out of train I interrupted, "How could you write a letter up yonder?"

"The letter?—Oh!—The letter! Keep looking at me between the eyes, please. It was a string-talk letter, that we'd learned the way of it from a blind beggar in the Punjab."

I remember that there had once come to the office a blind man with a knotted twig and a piece of string which he wound round the twig according to some cypher of his own. He could, after the lapse of days or hours, repeat the sentence which he had reeled up. He had reduced the alphabet to eleven primitive sounds; and tried to teach me his method, but failed.

"I sent that letter to Dravot," said Carnehan;

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"and told him to come back because this Kingdom was growing too big for me to handle, and then I struck for the first valley, to see how the priests were working. They called the village we took along with the Chief, Bashkai, and the first village we took, Er-Heb. The priest at Er-Heb was doing all right, but they had a lot of pending cases about land to show me, and some men from another village had been firing arrows at night. I went out and looked for that village and fired four rounds at it from a thousand yards. That used all the cartridges I cared to spend, and I waited for Dravot, who had been away two or three months, and I kept my people quiet.

"One morning I heard the devil's own noise of drums and horns, and Dan Dravot marches down the hill with his Army and a tail of hundreds of men, and, which was the most amazing—a great gold crown on his head. 'My Gord, Carnehan,' says Daniel, 'this is a tremenjus business, and we've got the whole country as far as it's worth having. I am the son of Alexander by Queen Semiramis, and you're my younger brother and a god too! It's the biggest thing we've ever seen. I've been marching and fighting for six weeks with the Army, and every footy little village for fifty miles has come in rejoicing; and more than that, I've got the key of the whole show, as you'll see, and I've got a crown for you! I told 'em to make two of 'em at a place called Shu, where the gold lies in the

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rock like suet in mutton. Gold I've seen, and turquoise I've kicked out of the cliffs, and there's garnets in the sands of the river, and here's a chunk of amber that a man brought me. Call up all the priests and, here, take your crown.'

"One of the men opens a black hair bag and I slips the crown on. It was too small and too heavy, but I wore it for the glory. Hammered gold it was—five pound weight, like a hoop of a barrel.

"'Peachey,' says Dravot, 'we don't want to fight no more. The Craft's the trick so help me!' and he brings forward that same Chief that I left at Bashkai—Billy Fish we called him afterwards, because he was so like Billy Fish that drove the big tank-engine at Mach on the Bolan in the old days. 'Shake hands with him,' says Dravot, and I shook hands and nearly dropped, for Billy Fish gave me the Grip. I said nothing, but tried him with the Fellow Craft Grip. He answers, all right, and I tried the Master's Grip, but that was a slip. 'A Fellow Craft he is!' I says to Dan. 'Does he know the word?' 'He does,' says Dan, 'and all the priests know. It's a miracle! The Chiefs and the priest can work a Fellow Craft Lodge in a way that's very like ours, and they've cut the marks on the rocks, but they don't know the Third Degree, and they've come to find out. It's Gord's Truth. I've known these long years that the Afghans knew up to the Fellow Craft Degree, but this is a miracle'

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‘A god and a Grand-Master of the Craft am I, and a Lodge in the Third Degree I will open, and we'll raise the head priests and the Chiefs of the villages.’

“‘It's against all the law,’ I says, ‘holding a Lodge without warrant from any one; and we never held office in any lodge.’

“‘It's a master-stroke of policy,’ says Dravot. ‘It means running the country as easy as a four-wheeled bogie on a down grade. We can't stop to inquire now, or they'll turn against us. I've forty Chiefs at my heel, and passed and raised according to their merit they shall be. Billet these men on the villages and see that we run up a Lodge of some kind. The temple of Imbra will do for the Lodge-room. The women must make aprons as you show them. I'll hold a levee of Chiefs to-night and Lodge to-morrow.’

“I was fair run off my legs, but I wasn't such a fool as not to see what a pull this Craft business gave us. I showed the priests' families how to make aprons of the degrees, but for Dravot's apron the blue border and marks was made of turquoise lumps on white hide, not cloth. We took a great square stone in the temple for the Master's chair, and little stones for the officers' chairs, and painted the black pavement with white squares, and did what we could to make things regular.

“At the levee which was held that night on the hillside with big bonfires, Dravot gives out

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that him and me were gods and sons of Alexander, and Past Grand-Masters in the Craft, and was come to make Kafiristan a country where every man should eat in peace and drink in quiet, and specially obey us. Then the Chiefs come round to shake hands, and they was so hairy and white and fair it was just shaking hands with old friends. We gave them names according as they was like men we had known in India—Billy Fish, Holly Dilworth, Pikky Kergan that was Bazaar-master when I was at Mhow, and so on, and so on.

"The most amazing miracle was at Lodge next night. One of the old priests was watching us continuous, and I felt uneasy, for I knew we'd have to fudge the Ritual, and I didn't know what the men knew. The old priest was a stranger come in from beyond the village of Bashkai. The minute Dravot puts on the Master's apron that the girls had made for him, the priest fetches a whoop and a howl, and tries to overturn the stone that Dravot was sitting on 'It's all up now,' I says. 'That comes of meddling with the Craft without warrant!' Dravot never winked an eye, not when ten priests took and tilted over the Grand-Master's chair—which was to say the stone of Imbra. The priest begins rubbing the bottom end of it to clear away the black dirt, and presently he shows ail the other priests the Master's Mark, same as was on Dravot's apron, cut into the stone. Not even the priests of the temple or

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Imbra knew it was there. The old chap falls flat on his face at Dravot's feet and kisses 'em. 'Luck again,' says Dravot, across the Lodge to me, 'they say it's the missing Mark that no one could understand the why of. We're more than safe now.' Then he bangs the butt of his gun for a gavel and says--'By virtue of the authority vested in me by my own right hand and the help of Peachey, I declare myself Grand-Master of all Freemasonry in Kafiristan in this the Mother Lodge o' the country, and King of Kafiristan equally with Peachey!' At that he puts on his crown and I puts on mine—I was doing Senior Warden—and we opens the Lodge in most ample form. It was a amazing miracle! The priests moved in Lodge through the first two degrees almost without telling, as if the memory was coming back to them. After that, Peachey and Dravot raised such as was worthy —high priests and Chiefs of far-off villages. Billy Fish was the first, and I can tell you we scared the soul out of him. It was not in any way according to Ritual, but it served our turn. We didn't raise more than ten of the biggest men because we didn't want to make the Degree common. And they was clamouring to be raised.

"In another six months," says Dravot, "we'll hold another Communication and see how you are working." Then he asks them about their villages, and learns that they was fighting one against the other and were fair

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sick and tired of it. And when they wasn't doing that they was fighting with the Mohammedans. 'You can fight those when they come into our country,' says Dravot. 'Tell off every tenth man of your tribes for a Frontier guard, and send two hundred at a time to this valley to be drilled. Nobody is going to be shot or speared any more so long as he does well, and I know that you won't cheat me because you're white people—sons of Alexander—and not like common, black Mohammedans. You are *my* people and by God,' says he, running off into English at the end—'I'll make a damned fine Nation of you, or I'll die in the making!'

"I can't tell all we did for the next six months because Dravot did a lot I couldn't see the hang of, and he learned their lingo in a way I never could. My work was to help the people plough, and now and again to go out with some of the Army and see what the other villages were doing, and make 'em throw rope-bridges across the ravines which cut up the country horrid. Dravot was very kind to me, but when he walked up and down in the pine wood pulling that bloody red beard of his with both fists I knew he was thinking plans I could not advise him about, and I just waited for orders.

"But Dravot never showed me disrespect before the people. They were afraid of me and the Army, but they loved L'an. He was the best of friends with the priests and the Chiefs, but any one could come across the hills

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with a complaint and Dravot would hear him out fair, and call four priests together and say what was to be done. He used to call in Billy Fish from Bashkai, and Pikky Kergan from Shu, and an old Chief we called Kafuzelum—it was like enough to his real name—and hold councils with 'em when there was any fighting to be done in small villages. That was his Council of War, and the four priests of Bashkai, Shu, Khawak, and Madora was his Privy Council. Between the lot of 'em they sent me, with forty men and twenty rifles, and sixty men carrying turquoises, into the Ghorband country to buy those hand-made Martini rifles, that come out of the Amir's workshops at Kabul, from one of the Amir's Herati regiments that would have sold the very teeth out of their mouths for turquoises.

"I stayed in Ghorband a month, and gave the Governor the pick of my baskets for hush-money, and bribed the colonel of the regiment some more, and, between the two and the tribespeople, we got more than a hundred hand-made Martinis, a hundred good Kohat Jezails that'll throw to six hundred yards, and forty manloads of very bad ammunition for the rifles. I came back with what I had, and distributed 'em among the men that the Chiefs sent in to me to drill. Dravot was too busy to attend to those things, but the old Army that we first made helped me, and we turned out five hundred men that could drill, and two hundred that knew

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how to hold arms pretty straight. Even those cork-screwed, hand-made guns was a miracle to them. Dravot talked big about powder-shops and factories, walking up and down in the pine wood when the winter was coming on.

"'I won't make a Nation,' says he. 'I'll make an Empire! These men aren't niggers; they're English! Look at their eyes—look at their mouths. Look at the way they stand up. They sit on chairs in their own houses. They're the Lost Tribes, or something like it, and they've grown to be English. I'll take a census in the spring if the priests don't get frightened. There must be a fair two million of 'em in these hills. The villages are full o' little children. Two million people—two hundred and fifty thousand fighting men—and all English! They only want the rifles and a little drilling. Two hundred and fifty thousand men, ready to cut in on Russia's right flank when she tries for India! Peachey, man,' he says, chewing his beard in great hunks, 'we shall be Emperors—Emperors of the Earth! Rajah Brooke will be a suckling to us. I'll treat with the Viceroy on equal terms. I'll ask him to send me twelve picked English—twelve that I know of—to help us govern a bit. There's Mackray, Sergeant-pensioner at Segowli—many's the good dinner he's given me, and his wife a pair of trousers. There's Donkin, the Warden of Toungoo Jail; there's hundreds that I could lay my hand on if I was in India. The Viceroy shall do it

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for me. I'll send a man through in the spring for those men, and I'll write for a dispensation from the Grand Lodge for what I've done as Grand-Master. That—and all the Sniders that'll be thrown out when the native troops in India take up the Martini. They'll be worn smooth, but they'll do for fighting in these hills. Twelve English, a hundred thousand Sniders run through the Amir's country in driblets—I'd be content with twenty thousand in one year—and we'd be an Empire. When everything was ship-shape, I'd hand over the crown—this crown I'm wearing now—to Queen Victoria on my knees, and she'd say—"Rise up, Sir Daniel Dravot." Oh, it's big! It's big, I tell you! But there's so much to be done in every place—Bashkai, Khawak, Shu, and everywhere else.'

"'What is it?' I says. 'There are no more men coming in to be drilled this autumn. Look at those fat, black clouds. They're bringing the snow.'

"'It isn't that,' says Daniel, putting his hand very hard on my shoulder; 'and I don't wish to say anything that's against you, for no other living man would have followed me and made me what I am as you have done. You're a first-class Commander-in-Chief, and the people know you; but—it's a big country, and somehow you can't help me, Peachey, in the way I want to be helped.'

"'Go to your blasted priests, then!' I said, and I was sorry when I made that remark.

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but it did hurt me sore to find Daniel talking so superior when I'd drilled all the men, and done all he told me.

"'Don't let's quarrel, Peachey,' says Daniel without cursing. 'You're a King too, and the half of this Kingdom is yours; but can't you see, Peachey, we want cleverer men than us now—three or four of 'em that we can scatter about for our Deputies? It's a hugeous great State, and I can't always tell the right thing to do, and I haven't time for all I want to do, and here's the winter coming on and all.' He put half his beard into his mouth, and it was as red as the gold of his crown.

"'I'm sorry, Daniel,' says I. 'I've done all I could. I've drilled the men, and shown the people how to stack their oats better, and I've brought in those tinware rifles from Ghorband—but I know what you're driving at. I take it Kings always feel oppressed that way.'

"'There's another thing too,' says Dravot, walking up and down. 'The winter's coming and these people won't be giving much trouble, and if they do we can't move about. I want a wife.'

"'For Gord's sake leave the women alone!' I says. 'We've both got all the work we can, though I *am* a fool. Remember the Contrack, and keep clear o' women.'

"'The Contrack only lasted till such time as we was Kings; and Kings we have been these months past,' says Dravot, weighing his crown

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in his hand. ‘You go get a wife too, Peachey—a nice, strappin’, plump girl that’ll keep you warm in the winter. They’re prettier than English girls, and we can take the pick of ‘em. Boil ‘em once or twice in hot water, and they’ll come as fair as chicken and ham.’

“‘Don’t tempt me!’ I says. ‘I will not have any dealings with a woman not till we are a dam’ side more settled than we are now. I’ve been doing the work o’ two men, and you’ve been doing the work o’ three. Let’s lie off a bit, and see if we can get some better tobacco from Afghan country and run in some good liquor; but no women.’

“‘Who’s talking o’ *women*? ’ says Dravot. ‘I said *wife*—a Queen to breed a King’s son for the King. A Queen out of the strongest tribe, that’ll make them your blood-brothers, and that’ll lie by your side and tell you all the people thinks about you and their own affairs. That’s what I want.’

“‘Do you remember that Bengali woman I kept at Mogul Serai when I was plate-layer?’ says I. ‘A fat lot o’ good she was to me. She taught me the lingo and one or two other things; but what happened? She ran away with the Station Master’s servant and half my month’s pay. Then she turned up at Dadur Junction in tow of a half-caste, and had the impudence to say I was her husband—all among the drivers of the running-shed!’

“‘We’ve done with that,’ says Dravot. ‘These

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women are whiter than you or me, and a Queen I will have for the winter months.'

"For the last time o' asking, Dan, do *not*,' I says. 'It'll only bring us harm. The Bible says that Kings ain't to waste their strength on women, 'specially when they've got a new, raw Kingdom to work over.

"For the last time of answering, I will,' said Dravot, and he went away through the pine-trees looking like a big red devil. The low sun hit his crown and beard on one side, and the two blazed like hot coals.

"But getting a wife was not as easy as Dan thought. He put it before the Council, and there was no answer till Billy Fish said that he'd better ask the girls. Dravot damned them all round. 'What's wrong with me?' he shouts, standing by the idol Imbra. 'Am I a dog or am I not enough of a man for your wenches? Haven't I put the shadow of my hand over this country? Who stopped the last Afghan raid?' It was me really, but Dravot was too angry to remember. 'Who bought your guns? Who repaired the bridges? Who's the Grand-Master of the sign cut in the stone?' and he thumped his hand on the block that he used to sit on in Lodge, and at Council, which opened like Lodge always. Billy Fish said nothing and no more did the others. 'Keep your hair on, Dan,' said I; 'and ask the girls. That's how it's done at home, and these people are quite English.'

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"The marriage of a King is a matter of State," says Dan, in a white-hot rage, for he could feel, I hope, that he was going against his better mind. He walked out of the Council-room, and the others sat still, looking at the ground.

"Billy Fish," says I to the Chief of Bashkai, "what's the difficulty here? A straight answer to a true friend." "You know," says Billy Fish. "How should a man tell you who know everything? How can daughters of men marry gods or devils? It's not proper."

"I remembered something like that in the Bible; but if, after seeing us as long as they had, they still believed we were gods, it wasn't for me to undeceive them.

"A god can do anything," says I. "If the King is fond of a girl he'll not let her die." "She'll have to," said Billy Fish. "There are all sorts of gods and devils in these mountains, and now and again a girl marries one of them and isn't seen any more. Besides, you two know the Mark cut in the stone. Only the gods know that. We thought you were men till you showed the sign of the Master."

"I wished then that we had explained about the loss of the genuine secrets of a Master-Mason at the first go-off; but I said nothing. All that night there was a blowing of horns in a little dark temple half-way down the hill, and I heard a girl crying fit to die. One of the priests told us that she was being prepared to marry the King.

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"I'll have no nonsense of that kind," says Dan. "I don't want to interfere with your customs, but I'll take my own wife." "The girl's a little bit afraid," says the priest. "She thinks she's going to die, and they are a-heartening of her up down in the temple."

"'Hearten her very tender, then,' says Dravot, 'or I'll hearten you with the butt of a gun so that you'll never want to be heartened again.' He licked his lips, did Dan, and stayed up walking about more than half the night, thinking of the wife that he was going to get in the morning. I wasn't any means comfortable, for I knew that dealings with a woman in foreign parts, though you was a crowned King twenty times over, could not but be risky. I got up very early in the morning while Dravot was asleep, and I saw the priests talking together in whispers, and the Chiefs talking together too, and they looked at me out of the corners of their eyes.

"'What is up, Fish?' I says to the Bashkai man, who was wrapped up in his furs and looking splendid to behold.

"'I can't rightly say,' says he; 'but if you can induce the King to drop all this nonsense about marriage, you'll be doing him and me and yourself a great service.'

"'That I do believe,' says I. 'But sure, you know, Billy, as well as me, having fought against and for us, that the King and me are nothing more than two of the finest men that God

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Almighty ever made. Nothing more, I do assure you.'

"That may be," says Billy Fish, "and yet I should be sorry if it was." He sinks his head upon his great fur cloak for a minute and thinks. "King" says he, "be you man or god or devil, I'll stick by you to-day. I have twenty of my men with me, and they will follow me. We'll go to Bashkai until the storm blows over."

"A little snow had fallen in the night, and everything was white except the greasy fat clouds that blew down and down from the north. Dravot came out with his crown on his head, swinging his arms and stamping his feet, and looking more pleased than Punch.

"For the last time, drop it, Dan," says I in a whisper. "Billy Fish says that there will be a row."

"A row among my people!" says Dravot. "Not much. Peachey, you're a fool not to get a wife, too. Where's the girl?" says he with a voice as loud as the braying of a jackass. "Call up all the Chiefs and priests, and let the Emperor see if his wife suits him."

"There was no need to call any one. They were all there leaning on their guns and spears round the clearing in the centre of the pine wood. A deputation of priests went down to the little temple to bring up the girl, and the horns blew up fit to wake the dead. Billy Fish saunters round and gets as close to Daniel as he could, and behind him stood his twenty men

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with matchlocks. Not a man of them under six feet. I was next to Dravot, and behind me was twenty men of the regular Army. Up comes the girl, and a strapping wench she was, covered with silver and turquoises but white as death, and looking back every minute at the priests.

"'She'll do,' said Dan, looking her over. 'What's to be afraid of, lass? Come and kiss me.' He puts his arm round her. She shuts her eyes, gives a bit of a squeak, and down goes her face in the side of Dan's flaming red beard.

"'The slut's bitten me!' says he, clapping his hand to his neck, and, sure enough, his hand was red with blood. Billy Fish and two of his matchlock-men catches hold of Dan by the shoulders and drags him into the Bashkai lot, while the priests howls in their lingo,—'Neither god nor devil but a man!' I was all taken aback, for a priest cut at me in front, and the Army behind began firing into the Bashkai men.

"'God A-mighty!' says Dan. 'What is the meaning o' this?'

"'Come back! Come away!' says Billy Fish. 'Ruin and Mutiny is the matter. We'll break for Bashkai if we can.'

"I tried to give some sort of orders to my men—the men o' the regular Army—but it was no use, so I fired into the brown of 'em with an English Martini and drilled three beggars in a line. The valley was full of shout-

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ing, howling creatures, and every soul was shrieking, 'Not a god nor a devil but only a man!' The Bashkai troops stuck to Billy Fish all they were worth, but their matchlocks wasn't half as good as the Kabul breech-loaders, and four of them dropped. Dan was bellowing like a bull, for he was very wrathy; and Billy Fish had a hard job to prevent him running out at the crowd.

"'We can't stand,' says Billy Fish. 'Make a run for it down the valley! The whole place is against us.' The matchlock-men ran, and we went down the valley in spite of Dravot's protestations. He was swearing horribly and crying out that he was a King. The priests rolled great stones on us, and the regular Army fired hard, and there wasn't more than six men, not counting Dan, Billy Fish, and Me, that came down to the bottom of the valley alive.

"'Then they stopped firing and the horns in the temple blew again. 'Come away—for Gord's sake come away!' says Billy Fish. 'They'll send runners out to all the villages before ever we get to Bashkai. I can protect you there, but I can't do anything now.'

"My own notion is that Dan began to go mad in his head that hour. He stared up and down like a stuck pig. Then he was all for walking back alone and killing the priests with his bare hands; which he could have done. 'An Emperor am I,' says Daniel, 'and next year I shall be a Knight of the Queen.'

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"All right, Dan," says I; "but come along now while there's time."

"It's your fault," says he, "for not looking after your Army better. There was mutiny in the midst, and you didn't know—you damned engine-driving, plate-laying, missionary's-pass-hunting hound!" He sat upon a rock and called me every foul name he could lay tongue to. I was too heartsick to care, though it was all his foolishness that brought the smash.

"I'm sorry, Dan," says I, "but there's no accounting for natives. This business is our Fifty-Seven. Maybe we'll make something out of it yet, when we've got to Bashkai."

"Let's get to Bashkai, then," says Dan, "and, by God, when I come back here again I'll sweep the valley so there isn't a bug in a blanket left!"

"We walked all that day, and all that night Dan was stumping up and down on the snow, chewing his beard and muttering to himself.

"There's no hope o' getting clear," said Billy Fish. "The priests will have sent runners to the villages to say that you are only men. Why didn't you stick on as gods till things was more settled? I'm a dead man," says Billy Fish, and he throws himself down on the snow and begins to pray to his gods.

"Next morning we was in a cruel bad country—all up and down, no level ground at all, and no food either. The six Bashkai men looked at Billy Fish hungry-wise as if they wanted to

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ask something, but they said never a word. At noon we came to the top of a flat mountain all covered with snow, and when we climbed up into it, behold, there was an army in position waiting in the middle!

"'The runners have been very quick,' says Billy Fish, with a little bit of a laugh. 'They are waiting for us.'

"Three or four men began to fire from the enemy's side, and a chance shot took Daniel in the calf of the leg. That brought him to his senses. He looks across the snow at the Army, and sees the rifles that we had brought into the country.

"'We're done for,' says he. 'They are Englishmen, these people—and it's my blasted nonsense that has brought you to this. Get back, Billy Fish, and take your men away; you've done what you could, and now cut for it. Carnehan,' says he, 'shake hands with me and go along with Billy. Maybe they won't kill you. I'll go and meet 'em alone. It's me that did it. Me, the King!'

"'Go!' says I. 'Go to Hell, Dan. I'm with you here. Billy Fish, you clear out, and we two will meet those folk.'

"'I'm a Chief,' says Billy Fish, quite quiet. 'I stay with you. My men can go.'

"The Bashkai fellows didn't wait for a second word, but ran off, and Dan and Me and Billy Fish walked across to where the drums were drumming and the horns were horning. It was

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cold—awful cold. I've got that cold in the back of my head now. There's a lump of it there."

The punkah-coolies had gone to sleep. Two kerosene lamps were blazing in the office, and the perspiration poured down my face and splashed on the blotter as I leaned forward. Carnehan was shivering, and I feared that his mind might go. I wiped my face, took a fresh grip of the piteously mangled hands, and said:—"What happened after that?"

The momentary shift of my eyes had broken the clear current.

"What was you pleased to say?" whined Carnehan. "They took them without any sound. Not a little whisper all along the snow, not though the King knocked down the first man that set hand on him—not though old Peachey fired his last cartridge into the brown of 'em. Not a single solitary sound did those swines make. They just closed up tight, and I tell you their furs stunk. There was a man called Billy Fish, a good friend of us all, and they cut his throat, Sir, then and there, like a pig; and the King kicks up the bloody snow and says:—'We've had a dashed fine run for our money. What's coming next?' But Peachey, Peachey Taliaferro, I tell you, Sir, in confidence as betwixt two friends, he lost his head, Sir. No, he didn't neither. The King lost his head, so he did, all along o' one of those cunning rope-bridges. Kindly let me have the

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paper-cutter, Sir. It tilted this way. They marched him a mile across that snow to a rope-bridge over a ravine with a river at the bottom. You may have seen such. They prodded him behind like an ox. ‘Damn your eyes!’ says the King. ‘D’you suppose I can’t die like a gentleman?’ He turns to Peachey—Peachey that was crying like a child. ‘I’ve brought you to this, Peachey,’ says he. ‘Brought you out of your happy life to be killed in Kafiristan, where you was late Commander-in-Chief of the Emperor’s forces. Say you forgive me, Peachey.’ ‘I do,’ says Peachey. ‘Fully and freely do I forgive you, Dan.’ ‘Shake hands, Peachey,’ says he. ‘I’m going now.’ Out he goes, looking neither right nor left, and when he was plumb in the middle of those dizzy dancing ropes, ‘Cut, you beggars,’ he shouts; and they cut, and old Dan fell, turning round and round and round, twenty thousand miles, for he took half an hour to fall till he struck the water, and I could see his body caught on a rock with the gold crown close beside.

“But do you know what they did to Peachey between two pine-trees? They crucified him, sir, as Peachey’s hands will show. They used wooden pegs for his hands and his feet; and he didn’t die. He hung there and screamed, and they took him down next day, and said it was a miracle that he wasn’t dead. They took him down—poor, old Peachey that hadn’t done them any harm—that hadn’t done them any . . .”

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He rocked to and fro and wept bitterly, wiping his eyes with the back of his scarred hands and moaning like a child for some ten minutes.

"They was cruel enough to feed him up in the temple, because they said he was more of a god than old Daniel that was a man. Then they turned him out on the snow, and told him to go home, and Peachey came home in about a year, begging along the roads quite safe; for Daniel Dravot he walked before and said:—'Come along, Peachey. It's a big thing we're doing.' The mountains they danced at night, and the mountains they tried to fall on Peachey's head, but Dan he held up his hand, and Peachey came along bent double. He never let go of Dan's hand, and he never let go of Dan's head. They gave it to him as a present in the temple, to remind him not to come again, and though the crown was pure gold, and Peachey was starving, never would Peachey sell the same. You knew Dravot, sir! You knew Right Worshipful Brother Dravot! Look at him now!"

He fumbled in the mass of rags round his bent waist; brought out a black horsehair bag embroidered with silver thread; and shook therefrom on to my table—the dried, withered head of Daniel Dravot! The morning sun that had long been paling the lamps struck the red beard and blind, sunken eyes; struck, too, a heavy circlet of gold studded with raw turquoises,

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that Carnehan placed tenderly on the battered temples:

"You behold now," said Carnehan, "the Emperor in his habit as he lived—the King of Kafiristan with his crown upon his head. Poor old Daniel that was a monarch once!"

I shuddered, for, in spite of defacements manifold, I recognised the head of the man of Marwar Junction. Carnehan rose to go. I attempted to stop him. He was not fit to walk abroad. "Let me take away the whisky, and give me a little money," he gasped. "I was a King once. I'll go to the Deputy Commissioner and ask to set in the Poorhouse till I get my health. No, thank you, I can't wait till you get a carriage for me. I've urgent private affairs—in the south—at Marwar."

He shambled out of the office and departed in the direction of the Deputy Commissioner's house. That day at noon I had occasion to go down the blinding hot Mall, and I saw a crooked man crawling along the white dust of the roadside, his hat in his hand, quavering dolorously after the fashion of street-singers at Home. There was not a soul in sight, and he was out of all possible earshot of the houses. And he sang through his nose, turning his head from right to left:

"The Son of Man goes forth to war,  
A golden crown to gain;  
His blood-red banner streams afar—  
Who follows in his train?"

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I waited to hear no more, but put the poor wretch into my carriage and drove him off to the nearest missionary for eventual transfer to the Asylum. He repeated the hymn twice while he was with me whom he did not in the least recognise, and I left him singing to the missionary.

Two days later I inquired after his welfare of the Superintendent of the Asylum.

"He was admitted suffering from sunstroke. He died early yesterday morning," said the Superintendent. "Is it true that he was half an hour bareheaded in the sun at midday?"

"Yes," said I, "but do you happen to know if he had anything upon him by any chance when he died?"

"Not to my knowledge," said the Superintendent.

And there the matter rest~~s~~.

# THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY\*

BY

EDWARD EVERETT HALE

I SUPPOSE that very few casual readers of the *New York Herald* of August 13, 1863, observed, in an obscure corner, among the "Deaths," the announcement:

"NOLAN. Died, on board U. S. Corvette *Levant*, Lat. 2° 11' S., Long. 131° W., on the 11th of May, PHILIP NOLAN."

I happened to observe it, because I was stranded at the old Mission House in Mackinaw, waiting for a Lake Superior steamer which did not choose to come, and I was devouring to the very stubble all the current literature I could get hold of, even down to the deaths and marriages in the *Herald*. My memory for names and people is good, and the reader will see, as he goes on, that I had reason enough to remember Philip Nolan. There are hundreds of readers who would have paused at that announcement, if the officer of the *Levant* who reported it had chosen to make it thus: "Died, May, 11, THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY." For it was as "The Man Without a Country" that poor Philip Nolan

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had generally been known by the officers who had him in charge during some fifty years, as, indeed, by all the men who sailed under them. I dare say there is many a man who has taken wine with him once a fortnight, in a three-years' cruise, who never knew that his name was "Nolan," or whether the poor wretch had any name at all.

There can now be no possible harm in telling this poor creature's story. Reason enough there has been till now, ever since Madison's administration went out in 1817, for very strict secrecy, the secrecy of honour itself, among the gentlemen of the navy who have had Nolan in successive charge. And certainly it speaks well for the *esprit de corps* of the profession, and the personal honour of its members, that to the press this man's story has been wholly unknown—and, I think, to the country at large also. I have reason to think, from some investigations I made in the Naval Archives when I was attached to the Bureau of Construction, that every official report relating to him was burned when Ross burned the public buildings at Washington. One of the Tuckers, or possibly one of the Watsons, had Nolan in charge at the end of the war; and when, on returning from his cruise, he reported at Washington to one of the Crowninshields,—who was in the Navy Department when he came home—he found that the Department ignored the whole business. Whether they really knew nothing about it, or whether it was a

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“*Non mi ricordo,*” determined on as a piece of policy, I do not know. But this I do know, that since 1817, and possibly before, no naval officer has mentioned Nolan in his report of a cruise.

But, as I say, there is no need for secrecy any longer. And now the poor creature is dead, it seems to me worth while to tell a little of his story, by way of showing young Americans of to-day what it is to be A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY.

Philip Nolan was as fine a young officer as there was in the “Legion of the West,” as the Western division of our army was then called. When Aaron Burr made his first dashing expedition down to New Orleans in 1805, at Fort Massac, or somewhere above on the river, he met, as the Devil would have it, this gay, dashing, bright young fellow; at some dinner-party, I think. Burr marked him, talked to him, walked with him, took him a day or two’s voyage in his flat-boat, and, in short, fascinated him. For the next year, barrack-life was very tame to poor Nolan. He occasionally availed himself of the permission the great man had given him to write to him. Long, high-worded, stilted letters the poor boy wrote and rewrote and copied. But never a line did he have in reply from the gay deceiver. The other boys in the garrison sneered at him, because he sacrificed in this unrequited affection for a politician the time which they devoted to

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Monongahela, hazard, and high-low-jack. Bourbon, euchre, and poker were still unknown. But one day Nolan had his revenge. This time Burr came down the river, not as an attorney seeking a place for his office, but as a disguised conqueror. He had defeated I know not how many district-attorneys; he had dined at I know not how many public dinners; he had been heralded in I know not how many Weekly Arguses, and it was rumoured that he had an army behind him and an empire before him. It was a great day—his arrival—to poor Nolan. Burr had not been at the fort an hour before he sent for him. That evening he asked Nolan to take him out in his skiff, to show him a canebrake or a cottonwood tree, as he said—really to seduce him; and by the time the sail was over, Nolan was enlisted body and soul. From that time, though he did not yet know it, he lived as **A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY.**

What Burr meant to do I know no more than you, dear reader. It is none of our business just now. Only, when the grand catastrophe came, and Jefferson and the House of Virginia of that day undertook to break on the wheel all the possible Clarencees of the then House of York, by the great treason trial at Richmond, some of the lesser fry in that distant Mississippi Valley, which was farther from us than Puget's Sound is to-day, introduced the like novelty on their provincial stage; and, to while away the monotony of the summer at Fort Adams, got up, for *spectacles*

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a string of court-martials on the officers there. One and another of the colonels and majors were tried, and, to fill out the list, little Nolan, against whom, Heaven knows, there was evidence enough—that he was sick of the service, had been willing to be false to it, and would have obeyed any order to march any-whither with any one who would follow him had the order been signed, “By command of His Exc. A. Burr.” The courts dragged on. The big flies escaped—rightly, for all I know. Nolan was proved guilty enough, as I say. Yet you and I would never have heard of him, reader, but that, when the president of the court asked him at the close whether he wished to say anything to show that he had always been faithful to the United States, he cried out, in a fit of frenzy:

“Damn the United States! I wish I may never hear of the United States again!”

I suppose he did not know how the words shocked old Colonel Morgan, who was holding the court. Half the officers who sat in it had served through the Revolution, and their lives, not to say their necks, had been risked for the very idea which he so cavalierly cursed in his madness. He, on his part, had grown up in the West of those days, in the midst of “Spanish plot,” “Orleans plot,” and all the rest. He had been educated on a plantation where the finest company was a Spanish officer or a French merchant from Orleans. His education, such as it was, had been perfected in commercial expedi-

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tions to Vera Cruz, and I think he told me his father once hired an Englishman to be a private tutor for a winter on the plantation. He had spent half his youth with an older brother, hunting horses in Texas, and, in a word, to him "United States" was scarcely a reality. Yet he had been fed by "United States" for all the years since he had been in the army. He had sworn on his faith as a Christian to be true to "United States." It was "United States" which gave him the uniform he wore, and the sword by his side. Nay, my poor Nolan, it was only because "United States" had picked you out first as one of her own confidential men of honour that "A. Burr" cared for you a straw more than for the flat-boat men who sailed his ark for him. I do not excuse Nolan; I only explain to the reader why he damned his country, and wished he might never hear her name again.

He heard her name but once again. From that moment, September 23, 1807, till the day he died, May 11, 1863, he never heard her name again. For that half-century and more he was a man without a country.

Old Morgan, as I said, was terribly shocked. If Nolan had compared George Washington to Benedict Arnold, or had cried "God save King George," Morgan would not have felt worse. He called the court into his private room, and returned in fifteen minutes, with a face like a sheet, to say:

"Prisoner, hear the sentence of the Court!"

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The Court decides, subject to the approval of the President, that you never hear the name of the United States again."

Nolan laughed. But nobody else laughed. Old Morgan was too solemn, and the whole room was hushed dead as night for a minute. Even Nolan lost his swagger in a moment. Then Morgan added:

"Mr. Marshal, take the prisoner to Orleans in an armed boat, and deliver him to the naval commander there."

The marshal gave his orders and the prisoner was taken out of court.

"Mr. Marshal," continued old Morgan, "see that no one mentions the United States to the prisoner. Mr. Marshal, make my respects to Lieutenant Mitchell at Orleans, and request him to order that no one shall mention the United States to the prisoner while he is on board ship. You will receive your written orders from the officer on duty here this evening. The court is adjourned without day."

I have always supposed that Colonel Morgan himself took the proceedings of the court to Washington city and explained them to Mr. Jefferson. Certain it is that the President approved them—certain, that is, if I may believe the men who say they have seen his signature. Before the *Nautilus* got round from New Orleans to the northern Atlantic coast with the prisoner on board, the sentence had been approved, and he was a man without a country.

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The plan then adopted was substantially the same which was necessarily followed ever after. Perhaps it was suggested by the necessity of sending him by water from Fort Adams and Orleans. The Secretary of the Navy—it must have been the first Crowninshield, though he is a man I do not remember—was requested to put Nolan on board a government vessel bound on a long cruise, and to direct that he should be only so far confined there as to make it certain that he never saw or heard of the country. We had few long cruises then, and the navy was very much out of favour; and as almost all of this story is traditional, as I have explained, I do not know certainly what his first cruise was. But the commander to whom he was intrusted—perhaps it was Tingey or Shaw, though I think it was one of the younger men (we are all old enough now)—regulated the etiquette and the precautions of the affair, and according to his scheme they were carried out, I suppose, till Nolan died.

When I was second officer of the *Intrepid*, some thirty years after, I saw the original paper of instructions. I have been sorry ever since that I did not copy the whole of it. It ran, however, much in this way:

“WASHINGTON (with a date, which  
must have been late in 1807).

“Sir: You will receive from Lieutenant Neale the person of Philip Nolan, late a lieutenant in the United States Army.

“This person on his trial by court-martial

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expressed, with an oath, the wish that he might 'never hear of the United States again.'

"The Court sentenced him to have his wish fulfilled.

"For the present, the execution of the order is intrusted by the President to this Department.

"You will take the prisoner on board your ship, and keep him there with such precautions as shall prevent his escape.

"You will provide him with such quarters, rations, and clothing as would be proper for an officer of his late rank if he were a passenger on your vessel on the business of his Government.

"The gentlemen on board will make any arrangements agreeable to themselves regarding his society. He is to be exposed to no indignity of any kind, nor is he ever unnecessarily to be reminded that he is a prisoner.

"But under no circumstances is he ever to hear of his country or to see any information regarding it; and you will especially caution all the officers under your command to take care, that, in the various indulgences which may be granted, this rule, in which his punishment is involved, shall not be broken.

"It is the intention of the Government that he shall never again see the country which he has disowned. Before the end of your cruise you will receive orders which will give effect to this intention.

"Respectfully yours,

"W. SOUTHARD, for the

"Secretary of the Navy."

If I had only preserved the whole of this paper there would be no break in the beginning of my sketch of this story. For Captain Shaw, if it were he, handed it to his successor in the charge, and he to his, and I suppose the commander of

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the *Levant* has it to-day as his authority for keeping this man in this mild custody.

The rule adopted on board the ships on which I have met "the man without a country" was, I think, transmitted from the beginning. No mess liked to have him permanently, because his presence cut off all talk of home or of the prospect of return, of politics or letters, or peace or of war—cut off more than half the talk men liked to have at sea. But it was always thought too hard that he should never meet the rest of us, except to touch hats, and we finally sank into one system. He was not permitted to talk with the men, unless an officer was by. With officers he had unrestrained intercourse, as far as they and he chose. But he grew shy, though he had favourites: I was one. Then the captain always asked him to dinner on Monday. Every mess in succession took up the invitation in its turn. According to the size of the ship, you had him at your mess more or less often at dinner. His breakfast he ate in his own state-room—which was where a sentinel or somebody on the watch could see the door. And whatever else he ate or drank, he ate or drank alone. Sometimes, when the marines or sailors had any special jollification, they were permitted to invite "Plain-Buttons," as they called him. Then Nolan was sent with some officer, and the men were forbidden to speak of home while he was there. I believe the theory was that the sight of his punishment did them good.

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They called him "Plain-Buttons," because, while he always chose to wear a regulation army uniform, he was not permitted to wear the army button, for the reason that it bore either the initials or the insignia of the country he had disowned.

I remember, soon after I joined the navy, I was on shore with some of the older officers from our ship and from the *Brandywine* which we had met at Alexandria. We had leave to make a party and go up to Cairo and the Pyramids. As we jogged along (you went on donkeys then), some of the gentlemen (we boys called them "Dons," but the phrase was long since changed) fell to talking about Nolan, and some one told the system which was adopted from the first about his books and other reading. As he was almost never permitted to go on shore, even though the vessel lay in port for months, his time at the best hung heavy; and everybody was permitted to lend him books, if they were not published in America and made no allusion to it. These were common enough in the old days, when people in the other hemisphere talked of the United States as little as we do of Paraguay. He had almost all the foreign papers that came into the ship, sooner or later; only somebody must go over them first, and cut out any advertisement or stray paragraph that alluded to America. This was a little cruel sometimes, when the back of what was cut out might be as innocent as Hesiod. Right in the

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midst of one of Napoleon's battles, or one of Canning's speeches, poor Nolan would find a great hole, because on the back of the page of that paper there had been an advertisement of a packet for New York, or a scrap from the President's message. I say this was the first time I ever heard of this plan, which afterward I had enough and more than enough to do with. I remember it, because poor Phillips, who was of the party, as soon as the allusion to reading was made, told a story of something which happened at the Cape of Good Hope on Nolan's first voyage; and it is the only thing I ever knew of that voyage. They had touched at the Cape, and had done the civil thing with the English Admiral and the fleet, and then, leaving for a long cruise up the Indian Ocean, Phillips had borrowed a lot of English books from an officer, which, in those days, as indeed in these, was quite a windfall. Among them, as the Devil would order, was the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," which they had all of them heard of, but which most of them had never seen. I think it could not have been published long. Well, nobody thought there could be any risk of anything national in that, though Phillips swore old Shaw had cut out the "Tempest" from Shakespeare before he let Nolan have it, because he said "the Bermudas ought to be ours, and, by Jove, should be one day." So Nolan was permitted to join the circle one afternoon when a lot of them sat on deck smoking and reading aloud

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People do not do such things so often now, but when I was young we got rid of a great deal of time so. Well, so it happened that in his turn Nolan took the book and read to the others, and he read very well, as I know. Nobody in the circle knew a line of the poem, only it was all magic and Border chivalry, and was a thousand years ago. Poor Nolan read steadily through the fifth canto, stopped a minute and drank something, and then began, without a thought of what was coming.

“Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,”—

It seems impossible to us that anybody ever heard this for the first time; but all these fellows did then, and poor Nolan himself went on, still unconsciously or mechanically:

“This is my own, my native land!”

Then they all saw something was to pay; but he expected to get through, I suppose, turned a little pale, but plunged on:

“Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,  
As home his footsteps he hath turned  
From wandering on a foreign strand?—  
If such there breathe, go, mark him well,”—

By this time the men were all beside themselves, wishing there was any way to make him turn over two pages. But he had not quite presence of mind for that; he gagged a little, coloured crimson, and staggered on:

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"For him no minstrel raptures swell;  
High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,  
Despite these titles, power, and pelf,  
The wretch, concentrated all in self,"—

and here the poor fellow choked, could not go on, but started up, swung the book into the sea, vanished into his state-room, "And by Jove," said Phillips, "we did not see him for two months again. And I had to make up some beggarly story to that English surgeon why I did not return his Walter Scott to him."

The story shows about the time when Nolan's braggadocio must have broken down. At first, they said, he took a very high tone, considered his imprisonment a mere farce, affected to enjoy the voyage, and all that; but Phillips said that after he came out of his state-room he never was the same man again. He never read aloud again, unless it was the Bible or Shakespeare, or something else he was sure of. But it was not that merely. He never entered in with the other young men exactly as a companion again. He was always shy afterward, when I knew him, very seldom spoke, unless he was spoken to, except to a very few friends. He lighted up occasionally—I remember late in his life hearing him fairly eloquent on something which had been suggested to him by one of Fléchier's sermons—but generally he had the nervous, tired look of a heart-wounded man.

When Captain Shaw was coming home—if,

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as I say, it was Shaw—rather to the surprise of everybody they made one of the Windward Islands, and lay off and on for nearly a week. The boys said the officers were sick of salt-junk, and meant to have turtle-soup before they came home. But after several days the *Warren* came to the same rendezvous; they exchanged signals; she sent to Phillips and these homeward-bound men letters and papers, and told them she was outward-bound, perhaps to the Mediterranean, and took poor Nolan and his traps on the boat back to try his second cruise. He looked very blank when he was told to get ready to join her. He had known enough of the signs of the sky to know that till that moment he was going "home." But this was a distinct evidence of something he had not thought of, perhaps—that there was no going home for him, even to a prison. And this was the first of some twenty such transfers, which brought him sooner or later into half our best vessels, but which kept him all his life at least some hundred miles from the country he had hoped he might never hear of again.

It may have been on that second cruise—it was once when he was up the Mediterranean—that Mrs. Graff, the celebrated Southern beauty of those days, danced with him. They had been lying a long time in the Bay of Naples, and the officers were very intimate in the English fleet, and there had been great festivities, and our men thought they must give a great ball on

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board the ship. How they ever did it on board the *Warren* I am sure I do not know. Perhaps it was not the *Warren*, or perhaps ladies did not take up so much room as they do now. They wanted to use Nolan's state-room for something, and they hated to do it without asking him to the ball; so the captain said they might ask him, if they would be responsible that he did not talk with the wrong people, "who would give him intelligence." So the dance went on, the finest party that had ever been known, I dare say; for I never heard of a man-of-war ball that was not. For ladies they had the family of the American consul, one or two travellers who had adventured so far, and a nice bevy of English girls and matrons, perhaps Lady Hamilton herself.

Well, different officers relieved each other in standing and talking with Nolan in a friendly way, so as to be sure that nobody else spoke to him. The dancing went on with spirit, and after a while even the fellows who took this honorary guard of Nolan ceased to fear any *contretemps*. Only when some English lady—Lady Hamilton, as I said, perhaps—called for a set of "American dances," an odd thing happened. Everybody then danced contra-dances. The black band, nothing loath, conferred as to what "American dances" were, and started off with "Virginia Reel," which they followed with "Money-Musk," which, in its turn in those days, should have been followed by "The Old Thirteen." But just as

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Dick, the leader, tapped for his fiddles to begin, and bent forward, about to say, in true negro state, “‘The Old Thirteen,’ gentlemen and ladies!” as he had said “‘Virginnry Reel,’ if you please!” and “‘Money-Musk,’ if you please!” the captain’s boy tapped him on the shoulder, whispered to him, and he did not announce the name of the dance. He merely bowed, began on the air, and they all fell to—the officers teaching the English girls the figure, but not telling them why it had no name.

But that is not the story I started to tell. As the dancing went on, Nolan and our fellows all got at ease, as I said—so much so, that it seemed quite natural for him to bow to that splendid Mrs. Graff, and say:

“I hope you have not forgotten me, Miss Rutledge. Shall I have the honour of dancing?”

He did it so quickly that Fellows, who was with him, could not hinder him. She laughed and said:

“I am not Miss Rutledge any longer, Mr. Nolan, but I will dance all the same,” just nodded to Fellows, as if to say he must leave Mr. Nolan to her, and led him off to the place where the dance was forming.

Nolan thought he had got his chance. He had known her at Philadelphia, and at other places had met her, and this was a Godsend. You could not talk in contra-dances, as you do in cotillions, or even in the pauses of waltzing, but there were chances for tongues and sounds,

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as well as for eyes and blushes. He began with her travels, and Europe, and Vesuvius, and the French, and then, when they had worked down, and had that long talking time at the bottom of the set, he said boldly, a little pale, she said, as she told me the story years after:

"And what do you hear from home, Mrs. Graff?"

And that splendid creature looked through him. Jove! how she must have looked through him!

"Home!! Mr. Nolan!!! I thought you were the man who never wanted to hear of home again!" And she walked directly up the deck to her husband, and left poor Nolan alone, as he always was. He did not dance again. I cannot give any history of him in order; nobody can now, and, indeed, I am not trying to.

These are the traditions, which I sort out, as I believe them, from the myths which have been told about this man for forty years. The lies that have been told about him are legion. The fellows used to say he was the "Iron Mask," and poor George Pons went to his grave in the belief that this was the author of "Junius," who was being punished for his celebrated libel on Thomas Jefferson. Pons was not very strong in the historical line.

A happier story than either of these I have told is of the war. That came along soon after. I have heard this affair told in three or four ways, and, indeed, it may have happened more

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than once. But which ship it was on I cannot tell. However, in one, at least, of the great frigate-duels with the English, in which the navy was really baptised, it happened that a round-shot from the enemy entered one of our ports square, and took right down the officer of the gun himself, and almost every man of the gun's crew. Now you may say what you choose about courage, but that is not a nice thing to see. But, as the men who were not killed picked themselves up, and as they and the surgeon's people were carrying off the bodies, there appeared Nolan, in his shirt-sleeves, with the rammer in his hand, and, just as if he had been the officer, told them off with authority—who should go to the cock-pit with the wounded men, who should stay with him—perfectly cheery, and with that way which makes men feel sure all is right and is going to be right. And he finished loading the gun with his own hands, aimed it, and bade the men fire. And there he stayed, captain of that gun, keeping those fellows in spirits, till the enemy struck, sitting on the carriage while the gun was cooling, though he was exposed all the time, showing them easier ways to handle heavy shot, making the raw hands laugh at their own blunders, and when the gun cooled again, getting it loaded and fired twice as often as any other gun on the ship. The captain walked forward by way of encouraging the men, and Nolan touched his hat and said:

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"I am showing them how we do this in the artillery, sir."

And this is the part of the story where all the legends agree. The commodore said:

"I see you do, and I thank you, sir; and I shall never forget this day, sir, and you never shall, sir."

And after the whole thing was over, and he had the Englishman's sword, in the midst of the state and ceremony of the quarter-deck, he said:

"Where is Mr. Nolan? Ask Mr. Nolan to come here."

And when Nolan came, he said:

"Mr. Nolan, we are all very grateful to you to-day; you are one of us to-day; you will be named in the despatches."

And then the old man took off his own sword of ceremony, and gave it to Nolan, and made him put it on. The man told me this who saw it. Nolan cried like a baby, and well he might. He had not worn a sword since that infernal day at Fort Adams. But always afterward, on occasions of ceremony, he wore that quaint old French sword of the commodore's.

The captain did mention him in the despatches. It was always said he asked that he might be pardoned. He wrote a special letter to the Secretary of War. But nothing ever came of it. As I said, that was about the time when they began to ignore the whole transaction at Washington, and when Nolan's imprisonment began

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to carry itself on because there was nobody to stop it without any new orders from home.

I have heard it said that he was with Porter when he took possession of the Nukahiwa Islands. Not this Porter, you know, but old Porter, his father, Essex Porter—that is, the old Essex Porter, not this Essex. As an artillery officer, who had seen service in the West, Nolan knew more about fortifications, embrasures, ravelins, stockades, and all that, than any of them did; and he worked with a right good-will in fixing that battery all right. I have always thought it was a pity Porter did not leave him in command there with Gamble. That would have settled all the question about his punishment. We should have kept the islands, and at this moment we should have one station in the Pacific Ocean. Our French friends, too, when they wanted this little watering-place, would have found it was preoccupied. But Madison and the Virginians, of course, flung all that away.

All that was near fifty years ago. If Nolan was thirty then, he must have been near eighty when he died. He looked sixty when he was forty. But he never seemed to me to change a hair afterward. As I imagine his life, from what I have seen and heard of it, he must have been in every sea, and yet almost never on land. He must have known, in a formal way, more officers in our service than any man living knows. He told me once, with a grave smile, that no man in the world lived so methodical a life as he. "You

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know the boys say I am the Iron Mask, and you know how busy he was." He said it did not do for any one to try to read all the time, more than to do anything else all the time, but that he read just five hours a day. "Then," he said, "I keep up my note-books, writing in them at such and such hours from what I have been reading, and I include in these my scrap-books." These were very curious indeed. He had six or eight, of different subjects. There was one of History, one of Natural Science, one which he called "Odds and Ends." But they were not merely books of extracts from newspapers. They had bits of plants and ribbons, shells tied on, and carved scraps of bone and wood, which he had taught the men to cut for him, and they were beautifully illustrated. He drew admirably. He had some of the funniest drawings there, and some of the most pathetic, that I have ever seen in my life. I wonder who will have Nolan's scrap-books.

Well, he said his reading and his notes were his profession, and that they took five hours and two hours respectively of each day. "Then," said he, "every man should have a diversion as well as a profession. My Natural History is my diversion." That took two hours a day more. The men used to bring him birds and fish, but on a long cruise he had to satisfy himself with centipedes and cockroaches and such small game. He was the only naturalist I ever met who knew anything about the habits of the house-fly and

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the mosquito. All those people can tell you whether they are *Lepidoptera* or *Steptopotera*; but as for telling how you can get rid of them, or how they get away from you when you strike at them—why, Linnaeus knew as little of that as John Foy, the idiot, did.

These nine hours made Nolan's regular daily "occupation." The rest of the time he talked or walked. Till he grew very old, he went aloft a great deal. He always kept up his exercise, and I never heard that he was ill. If any other man was ill, he was the kindest nurse in the world; and he knew more than half the surgeons do. Then, if anybody was sick or died, or if the captain wanted him to, on any other occasion, he was always ready to read prayers. I have said that he read beautifully.

My own acquaintance with Philip Nolan began six or eight years after the English war, on my first voyage after I was appointed a midshipman. It was in the first days after our Slave-Trade treaty, while the Reigning House, which was still the House of Virginia, had still a sort of sentimentalism about the suppression of the horrors of the Middle Passage, and something was sometimes done that way. We were in the South Atlantic on that business. From the time I joined, I believe I thought Nolan was a sort of lay chaplain—a chaplain with a blue coat. I never asked about him. Everything in the ship was strange to me. I knew it was green to ask questions, and I suppose I thought ~~there~~

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was a "Plain-Buttons" on every ship. We had him to dine in our mess once a week, and the caution was given that on that day nothing was to be said about home. But if they had told us not to say anything about the planet Mars or the Book of Deuteronomy, I should not have asked why; there were a great many things which seemed to me to have as little reason.

I first came to understand anything about "the man without a country" one day when we overhauled a dirty little schooner which had slaves on board. An officer was sent to take charge of her, and, after a few minutes, he sent back his boat to ask that some one might be sent him who could speak Portuguese. We were all looking over the rail when the message came, and we all wished we could interpret, when the captain asked who spoke Portuguese. But none of the officers did, and just as the captain was sending forward to ask if any of the people could, Nolan stepped out and said he should be glad to interpret, if the captain wished, as he understood the language. The captain thanked him, fitted out another boat with him, and in this boat it was my luck to go. When we got there, it was such a scene as you seldom see, and never want to. Nastiness beyond account, and chaos run loose in the midst of the nastiness. There were not a great many of the negroes; but by way of making what there were understand that they were free, Vaughan had had their hand-cuffs and ankle-cuffs knocked off, and, for convenience's

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sake, was putting them upon the rascals of the schooner's crew. The negroes were, most of them, out of the hold, and swarming all round the dirty deck, with a central throng surrounding Vaughan and addressing him in every dialect, and *patois* of a dialect, from the Zulu click up to the Parisian of Beledeljereed.

As we came on deck, Vaughan looked down from a hogshead, on which he had mounted in desperation, and said:

"For God's love, is there anybody who can make these wretches understand something? The men gave them rum, and that did not quiet them. I knocked that big fellow down twice, and that did not soothe him. And then I talked Choctaw to all of them together, and I'll be hanged if they understood that as well as they understood the English."

Nolan said he could speak Portuguese, and one or two fine-looking Kroomen were dragged out, who, as it had been found already, had worked for the Portuguese on the coast at Fernando Po.

"Tell them they are free," said Vaughan. "And tell them that these rascals are to be hanged as soon as we can get rope enough."

Nolan "put that into Spanish"—that is, he explained it in such Portuguese as the Kroomen could understand, and they in turn to such of the negroes as could understand them. Then there was such a yell of delight, clinching of fists, leaping and dancing, kissing of Nolan's

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feet, and a general rush made to the hogshead by way of spontaneous worship of Vaughan, as the *deus ex machina* of the occasion.

"Tell them," said Vaughan, well pleased, "that I will take them all to Cape Palmas."

This did not answer so well. Cape Palmas was practically as far from the homes of most of them as New Orleans or Rio Janeiro was—that is, they would be eternally separated from home there. And their interpreters, as we could understand, instantly said, "*Ah, non Palmas,*" and began to propose infinite other expedients in most voluble language. Vaughan was rather disappointed at this result of his liberality, and asked Nolan eagerly what they said. The drops stood on poor Nolan's white forehead, as he hushed the men down, and said:

"He says, 'Not Palmas.' He says, 'Take us home, take us to our own country, take us to our own house, take us to our own pickaninnies and our own women.' He says he has an old father and mother who will die if they do not see him. And this one says he left his people all sick, and paddled down to Fernando to beg the white doctor to come and help them, and that these devils caught him in the bay just in sight of home, and that he has never seen anybody from home since then. And this one says," choked out Nolan, "that he has not heard a word from his home in six months, while he has been locked up in an infernal barracoon."

Vaughan always said he grew gray himself

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while Nolan struggled through this interpretation. I, who did not understand anything of the passion involved in it, saw that the very elements were melting with fervent heat, and that something was to pay somewhere. Even the negroes themselves stopped howling, as they saw Nolan's agony, and Vaughan's almost equal agony of sympathy. As quick as he could get words, he said:

"Tell them yes, yes, yes; tell them they shall go to the Mountains of the Moon, if they will. If I sail the schooner through the Great White Desert, they shall go home!"

And after some fashion Nolan said so. And then they all fell to kissing him again, and wanted to rub his nose with theirs.

But he could not stand it long, and, getting Vaughan to say he might go back, he beckoned me down into our boat. As we lay back in the stern-sheets and the men gave way, he said to me: "Youngster, let that show you what it is to be without a family, without a home, and without a country. And if you are ever tempted to say a word or to do a thing that shall put a bar between you and your family, your home, and your country, pray God in his mercy to take you that instant home to his own heaven. Stick by your family, boy; forget you have a self, while you do everything for them. Think of your home, boy; write and send and talk about it. Let it be nearer and nearer to your thought the farther you have to travel from it; and rush

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back to it when you are free, as that poor black slave is doing now. And for your country, boy," and the words rattled in his throat, "and for that flag," and he pointed to the ship, "never dream a dream but of serving her as she bids you, though the service carry you through a thousand hells. No matter what happens to you, no matter who flatters you or who abuses you, never look at another flag, never let a night pass but you pray God to bless that flag. Remember, boy, that behind all these men you have to do with, behind officers, and government, and people even, there is the Country Herself, your Country, and that you belong to Her as you belong to your own mother. Stand by Her, boy, as you would stand by your mother if those devils there had got hold of her to-day!"

I was frightened to death by his calm, hard passion, but I blundered out that I would, by all that was holy, and that I had never thought of doing anything else. He hardly seemed to hear me, but he did, almost in a whisper, say: "Oh, if anybody had said so to me when I was of your age!"

I think it was this half-confidence of his, which I never abused, for I never told this story till now, which afterward made us great friends. He was very kind to me. Often he sat up, or even got up, at night, to walk the deck with me, when it was my watch. He explained to me a great deal of my mathematics, and I owe to him my taste for mathematics. He lent me books,

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and helped me about my reading. He never alluded so directly to his story again, but from one and another officer I have learned, in thirty years, what I am telling. When we parted from him in St. Thomas harbour, at the end of our cruise, I was more sorry than I can tell. I was very glad to meet him again in 1830; and later in life, when I thought I had some influence in Washington, I moved heaven and earth to have him discharged. But it was like getting a ghost out of prison. They pretended there was no such man, and never was such a man. They will say so at the Department now! Perhaps they do not know. It will not be the first thing in the service of which the Department appears to know nothing!

There is a story that Nolan met Burr once on one of our vessels, when a party of Americans came on board in the Mediterranean. But this I believe to be a lie; or, rather, it is a myth, *ben trovato*, involving a tremendous blowing-up with which he sunk Burr, asking him how he liked to be "without a country." But it is clear from Burr's life that nothing of the sort could have happened, and I mention this only as an illustration of the stories which get a-going where there is the least mystery at bottom.

So poor Philip Nolan had his wish fulfilled. I know but one fate more dreadful: it is the fate reserved for those men who shall have one day to exile themselves from their country because they have attempted her ruin, and

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shall have at the same time to see the prosperity and honour to which she rises when she has rid herself of them and their iniquities. The wish of poor Nolan, as we all learned to call him, not because his punishment was too great, but because his repentance was so clear, was precisely the wish of every Bragg and Beauregard who broke a soldier's oath two years ago, and of every Maury and Barron who broke a sailor's. I do not know how often they have repented. I do know that they have done all that in them lay that they might have no country, that all the honours, associations, memories, and hopes which belong to "country" might be broken up into little shreds and distributed to the winds. I know, too, that their punishment, as they vegetate through what is left of life to them in wretched Boulognes and Leicester Squares, where they are destined to upbraid each other till they die, will have all the agony of Nolan's, with the added pang that every one who sees them will see them to despise and to execrate them. They will have their wish, like him.

For him, poor fellow, he repented of his folly, and then, like a man, submitted to the fate he had asked for. He never intentionally added to the difficulty or delicacy of the charge of those who had him in hold. Accidents would happen, but they never happened from his fault. Lieutenant Truxton told me that, when Texas was annexed, there was a careful discussion among the officers, whether they should get hold of

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Nolan's handsome set of maps and cut Texas out of it—from the map of the world and the map of Mexico. The United States had been cut out when the atlas was bought for him. But it was voted, rightly enough, that to do this would be virtually to reveal to him what had happened, or, as Harry Cole said, to make him think Old Burr had succeeded. So it was from no fault of Nolan's that a great botch happened at my own table, when, for a short time, I was in command of the *George Washington* corvette, on the South American station. We were lying in the La Plata, and some of the officers, who had been on shore and had just joined again, were entertaining us with accounts of their misadventures in riding the half-wild horses of Buenos Ayres. Nolan was at table, and was in an unusually bright and talkative mood. Some story of a tumble reminded him of an adventure of his own when he was catching wild horses in Texas with his adventurous cousin, at a time when he must have been quite a boy. He told the story with a good deal of spirit—so much so, that the silence which often follows a good story hung over the table for an instant, to be broken by Nolan himself. For he asked perfectly unconsciously:

“Pray, what has become of Texas? After the Mexicans got their independence, I thought that province of Texas would come forward very fast. It is really one of the finest regions on earth; it is the Italy of this continent. But I have not

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seen or heard a word of Texas for near twenty years."

There were two Texan officers at the table. The reason he had never heard of Texas was that Texas and her affairs had been painfully cut out of his newspapers since Austin began his settlements, so that, while he read of Honduras and Tamaulipas, and, till quite lately, of California, this virgin province, in which his brother had travelled so far, and, I believe, had died, had ceased to be to him. Waters and Williams, the two Texas men, looked grimly at each other and tried not to laugh. Edward Morris had his attention attracted by the third link in the chain of the captain's chandelier. Watrous was seized with a convulsion of sneezing. Nolan himself saw that something was to pay, he did not know what. And I, as master of the feast, had to say:

"Texas is out of the map, Mr. Nolan. Have you seen Captain Back's curious account of Sir Thomas Roe's Welcome?"

After that cruise I never saw Nolan again. I wrote to him at least twice a year, for in that voyage we became even confidentially intimate; but he never wrote to me. The other men tell me that in those fifteen years he *aged* very fast, as well he might, indeed, but that he was still the same gentle, uncomplaining, silent sufferer that he ever was, bearing as best he could his self-appointed punishment—rather less social, perhaps, with new men whom he did not *know*,

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out more anxious, apparently, than ever to serve and befriend and teach the boys, some of whom fairly seemed to worship him. And now it seems the dear old fellow is dead. He has found a home at last, and a country.

Since writing this, and while considering whether or no I would print it, as a warning to the young Nolans and Vallandighams and Tattnalls of to-day, I have received from Danforth, who is on board the *Levant*, a letter which gives an account of Nolan's last hours. It removes all my doubts about telling this story.

To understand the first words of the letter, the non-professional reader should remember that after 1817 the position of every officer who had Nolan in charge was one of the greatest delicacy. The government had failed to renew the order of 1807 regarding him. What was a man to do? Should he let him go? What, then, if he were called to account by the Department for violating the order of 1807? Should he keep him? What, then, if Nolan should be liberated some day, and should bring an action for false imprisonment or kidnapping against every man who had had him in charge? I urged and pressed this upon Southard, and I have reason to think that other officers did the same thing. But the Secretary always said, as they so often do at Washington, that there were no special orders to give, and that we must act on our own judgment. That means, "If you succeed, you will be sustained; if you fail, you

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will be disavowed." Well, as Danforth says, all that is over now, though I do not know but I expose myself to a criminal prosecution on the evidence of the very revelation I am making.

Here is the letter:

"LEVANT, 2° 2' S. @ 131° W.

"*Dear Fred:* I try to find heart and life to tell you that it is all over with dear old Nolan. I have been with him on this voyage more than I ever was, and I can understand wholly now the way in which you used to speak of the dear old fellow. I could see that he was not strong, but I had no idea the end was so near. The doctor has been watching him very carefully, and yesterday morning came to me and told me that Nolan was not so well, and had not left his state-room—a thing I never remember before. He had let the doctor come and see him as he lay there—the first time the doctor had been in the state-room—and he said he should like to see me. Oh, dear! do you remember the mysteries we boys used to invent about his room in the old *Intrepid* days? Well, I went in, and there, to be sure, the poor fellow lay in his berth, smiling pleasantly as he gave me his hand, but looking very frail. I could not help a glance round, which showed me what a little shrine he had made of the box he was lying in. The Stars and Stripes were triced up above and around a picture of Washington, and he had painted a majestic eagle, with lightnings blazing from his beak and his foot just clasping the whole globe, which his wings overshadowed. The dear old boy saw my glance, and said, with a sad smile, 'Here, you see, I have a country!' And then he pointed to the foot of his bed, where I had not seen before a great map of the United States, as he had drawn it from memory, and

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which he had there to look upon as he lay. Quaint, queer old names were on it, in large letters: 'Indiana Territory,' 'Mississippi Territory,' and 'Louisiana Territory,' as I suppose our fathers learned such things. But the old fellow had patched in Texas, too; he had carried his western boundary all the way to the Pacific, but on that shore he had defined nothing.

"'Oh, Danforth,' he said, 'I know I am dying. I cannot get home. Surely you will tell me something now? Stop! Stop! Do not speak till I say what I am sure you know, that there is not in this ship, that there is not in America—God bless her!—a more loyal man than I. There cannot be a man who loves the old flag as I do, or prays for it as I do, or hopes for it as I do. There are thirty-four stars in it now, Danforth. I thank God for that, though I do not know what their names are. There has never been one taken away; I thank God for that. I know by that that there has never been any successful Burr. Oh, Danforth, Danforth,' he sighed out, 'how like a wretched night's dream a boy's idea of personal fame or of separate sovereignty seems, when one looks back on it after such a life as mine! But tell me—tell me something—tell me everything, Danforth, before I die!'

"Ingham, I swear to you that I felt like a monster that I had not told him everything before. Danger or no danger, delicacy or no delicacy, who was I, that I should have been acting the tyrant all this time over this dear, sainted old man, who had years ago expiated, in his whole manhood's life, the madness of a boy's treason? 'Mr. Nolan,' said I, 'I will tell you everything you ask about. Only, where shall I begin?'

"Oh, the blessed smile that crept over his white face! And he pressed my hand and said, 'God bless you! Tell me their names,' he said.

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and he pointed to the stars on the flag. 'The last I know is Ohio. My father lived in Kentucky. But I have guessed Michigan and Indiana and Mississippi—that was where Fort Adams is. They make twenty. But where are your other fourteen? You have not cut up any of the old ones, I hope?'

"Well, that was not a bad text, and I told him the names in as good order as I could, and he bade me take down his beautiful map and draw them in as I best could with my pencil. He was wild with delight about Texas—told me how his cousin died there; he had marked a gold cross near where he supposed his grave was; and he had guessed at Texas. Then he was delighted as he saw California and Oregon. That, he said, he had suspected partly, because he had never been permitted to land on that shore, though the ships were there so much. 'And the men,' said he, laughing, 'brought off a good deal besides furs.' Then he went back—heavens, how far!—to ask about the *Chesapeake*, and what was done to Barron for surrendering her to the *Leopard*, and whether Burr ever tried again—and he ground his teeth with the only passion he showed. But in a moment that was over, and he said, 'God forgive me, for I am sure I forgive him.' Then he asked about the old war—told me the true story of his serving the gun the day we took the *Java*—asked about dear old David Porter, as he called him. Then he settled down more quietly, and very happily, to hear me tell in an hour the history of fifty years.

"How I wished it had been somebody who knew something! But I did as well as I could. I told him of the English war. I told him about Fulton and the steamboat beginning. I told him about old Scott, and Jackson—told him all I could think of about the Mississippi, and New Orleans, and Texas, and his own old Ken-

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ucky. And what do you think he asked? 'Who was in command of the Legion of the West?' I told him it was a very gallant officer named Grant, and that, by our last news, he was about to establish his headquarters at Vicksburg. Then, 'Where was Vicksburg?' I worked that out on the map; it was about a hundred miles, more or less, above his old Fort Adams, and I thought Fort Adams must be a ruin now. 'It must be at old Vick's plantation, at Walnut Hills,' said he; 'well, that is a change!'

"I tell you, Ingham, it was a hard thing to condense the history of half a century into that talk with a sick man. And I do not now know what I told him—of emigration, and the means of it—of steamboats, and railroads, and telegraphs—of inventions, and books, and literature—of the colleges, and West Point, and the Naval School—but with the queerest interruptions that ever you heard. You see, it was Robinson Crusoe asking all the accumulated questions of fifty-six years!"

"I remember he asked, all of a sudden, who was President now. And when I told him, he asked if Old Abe was General Benjamin Lincoln's son. He said he met old General Lincoln, when he was quite a boy himself, at some Indian treaty. I said no, that Old Abe was a Kentuckian like himself, but I could not tell him of what family; he had worked up from the ranks. 'Good for him!' cried Nolan; 'I am glad of that. As I have brooded and wondered, I have thought our danger was in keeping up those regular successions in the first families.' Then I got talking about my visit to Washington. I told him of meeting the Oregon Congressman, Harding; I told him about the Smithsonian, and the Exploring Expedition; I told him about the Capitol, and the statues for the pediment, and Crawford's Liberty, and Greenough's Washington. Ingham,

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I told him everything I could think of that would show the grandeur of his country and its prosperity; but I could not make up my mouth to tell him a word about this infernal rebellion!

"And he drank it in and enjoyed it as I cannot tell you. He grew more and more silent, yet I never thought he was tired or faint. I gave him a glass of water, but he just wet his lips, and told me not to go away. Then he asked me to bring the Presbyterian 'Book of Public Prayer,' which lay there, and said, with a smile, that it would open at the right place—and so it did. There was his double red mark down the page. And I knelt down and read, and he repeated with me, 'For ourselves and our country, Oh, gracious God, we thank Thee, that, notwithstanding our manifold transgressions of Thy holy laws, Thou hast continued to us Thy marvellous kindness'—and so to the end of that thanksgiving. Then he turned to the end of the same book, and I read the words more familiar to me: 'Most heartily we beseech Thee with Thy favour to behold and bless Thy servant, the President of the United States, and all others in authority'—and the rest of the Episcopal collect. 'Danforth,' said he, 'I have repeated those prayers night and morning, it is now fifty-five years.' And then he said he would go to sleep.

"He bent me down over him and kissed me, and he said, 'Look in my Bible, Danforth, when I am gone.' And I went away.

"But I had no thought it was the end. I thought he was tired and would sleep. I knew he was happy, and I wanted him to be alone.

"But in an hour, when the doctor went in gently, he found Nolan had breathed his life away with a smile. He had something pressed close to his lips. It was his father's badge of the Order of the Cincinnati.

"We looked in his Bible, and there was a slip

## The Man Without a Country

of paper at the place where he had marked the text:

"They desire a country, even a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city."

"On this slip of paper he had written:

"Bury me in the sea; it has been my home, and I love it. But will not some one set up a stone for my memory at Fort Adams or at Orleans, that my disgrace may not be more than I ought to bear? Say on it:

"*In Memory of*

"PHILIP NOLAN,

"*Lieutenant in the Army of the United States.*

"He loved his country as no other man has loved her; but no man deserved less at her hands"

## THE PIECE OF STRING

BY

HENRI RENÉ ALBERT GUY DE MAUPASSANT

ON all the roads leading to Goderville, the peasants and their wives were coming to town for market-day. The men shambled along at an easy-going gait, with bodies bent forward. Their long legs were deformed and twisted through hard work—from the weight of the plough, which at the same time throws the left shoulder too high, and ruins the figure; from mowing the grain, which effort causes the knees to spread too far apart; and from all the other slow and painful labours of country life. Their blue blouses, starched to a sheenlike varnish and finished at collar and wristbands with little designs in white stitching, stood from their bony bodies like balloons ready for flight, with a head, two arms, and two feet protruding.

Some of the men had a cow or calf in tow at the end of a rope, while their wives followed close behind the animal, switching it over the haunches with a leafy branch to hasten its pace.

The women carried large baskets, out of which stuck the heads of chickens and ducks. They took much shorter and quicker steps than the men. Their lanky, spare figures were decorated

## The Piece of String

with mean little shawls pinned across their flat breasts. Each head bore a white linen cover, bound close to the hair and surmounted by a cap.

Now and then, there went by a waggonette drawn by a pony on a jerky trot, which jostled the two men on the seat in a ludicrous manner, and made the woman at the end of the cart hold the sides firmly for ease from the rough jolting.

In the Goderville market-place was a great crowd of men and animals. The horns of the cattle, the high, long-napped hats of the well-to-do peasants, and the head-dresses of women bobbed above the level of that crowd. Noisy voices, sharp and shrill, kept up a wild and ceaseless clamour, only outdone now and then by a great guffaw of laughter from the strong lungs of a jolly bumpkin, or a prolonged *moo* from a cow tied to the wall of some house.

Everywhere it smelled of stables, of milk and manure, of hay and sweat. The air was redolent with that sourish, disagreeable odour savouring of man and beast which is peculiar to the labourers of the fields.

Master Hauchecorne, of Bréauté, had just arrived at Goderville, and was directing his steps to the square when he observed on the ground a little bit of string. Economical, like all true Normans, Master Hauchecorne considered that anything useful was worth picking up, and he bent down painfully, for he suffered from rheumatism. He picked up the scrap of twine from

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the ground, and was preparing to wind it up carefully when he noticed Master Malandain, the harness-maker, looking at him from his doorway. Once they had a quarrel over a halter and had kept angry ever since, both of them holding spite. Master Hauchecorne was smitten with a certain sense of shame at being seen thus by his enemy searching in the dirt for a mere bit of string. He hastily hid his find under his blouse, then in the pocket of his breeches—after which he pretended to be still looking at his feet for something which he had not yet found. At length, he started toward the market-place, his body almost bent double by his chronic pains.

He lost himself at once in the slow, clamorous throng, which was agitated by perpetual bickerings. The prospective buyers, after looking the cows over, would go away only to return perplexed; always fearing to be taken in; never reaching a decision, but narrowly watching the seller's eyes, seeking in the end to detect the deceit of the man and the defect in his animal.

The women, having put their big baskets at their feet, had pulled out the poultry, which lay on the ground with legs tied, with frightened eyes and scarlet combs.

They listened to offers, maintaining their prices with a sharp air and impassive face, or else at a sweep accepting a reduced price, crying after the customer who left reluctantly. "It's settled, Anthime; I'll let you have them!"

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Then, by degrees, the square emptied, and, as the Angelus struck noon, those living at a distance flocked to the inns.

At Jourdain's, the dining-room was filled with guests, as full as the great courtyard was with vehicles of every description—carts, gigs, waggonettes, tilburies, nondescript jaunting-cars, yellow with mud, misshapen, patched up, lifting their shafts to heaven like two arms, or else in a sorry plight with nose in the mud and back in the air.

Right opposite to where the diners were at table, the immense fireplace, all brightly aflame, imparted a genial warmth to the backs of the people ranged on the right. Three spits were turning, loaded with chickens, with pigeons and with legs of mutton; and a delicious odour of roast meat and of gravy gushing over roast brown skin took wing from the hearth, kindled good humour, and made mouths water.

All the aristocracy of the plough were eating there at Jourdain's, the innkeeper who dealt in horses—a shrewd fellow, who had a goodish penny put by.

The dishes were passed and emptied, as were likewise huge jugs of yellow cider. Every one recounted his dealings—his buying and selling. They gave news of the crops. The weather was good for greens, but somewhat wet for wheat.

All at once, a drum rolled in the court before the house. Almost everybody, save the toc

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indifferent, immediately sprang to their feet and ran to the door, or to the windows, with mouth still full and napkin in hand.

After the public crier had stopped his racket, he launched forth in a jerky voice, making his pauses at the wrong time:

"Be it known to the inhabitants of Goderville, and in general to all persons present at the market, that there was lost this morning on the Beuzeville road, between nine and ten o'clock, a black leather pocket-book containing five hundred francs and business papers. You are requested to return it to the mayor's office, at once, or to Master Fortuné Houlbrèque, of Manneville. There will be twenty francs reward."

Then the man went away. They heard once more from afar the dull drum-beats and the fading voice of the crier.

After that, they began to discuss this event, counting the chances Master Houlbrèque yet had of recovering or not recovering his pocket-book.

And the meal went on.

They were finishing their coffee when the corporal of police appeared on the threshold.

He asked:

"Master Hauchecorne, of Bréauté—is he here?"

Hauchecorne, seated at the other end of the table, answered:

"Here I am."

And the corporal resumed:

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"Master Hauchecorne, will you have the kindness to come with me to the mayor's office? The mayor would like to speak to you."

The peasant, surprised and disturbed, tossed off his drink and arose, worse bent than in the morning, because the first steps after a rest were always especially difficult. He started off, repeating:

"Here I am; here I am."

And he followed the corporal.

The mayor was awaiting him, seated in his official chair. He was the notary of the place, a large, grave man of pompous speech.

"Master Hauchecorne," he said, "you were seen this morning, on the Beuzeville road, to pick up the pocket-book lost by Master Houlbrèque, of Manneville."

The countryman, confused, stared at the mayor, already frightened by this suspicion attaching to him—why he could not understand.

"I—I—I picked up that pocket-book?"

"Yes, you."

"On my word of honour, I didn't even know nothing about it."

"You were seen."

"They saw me—me? Who's they what saw me?"

"Master Malandain, the harness-maker."

Then the old man remembered, understood, and reddened with anger.

"Ah! he saw me, did he, the rascal? He saw

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me pick up this here string. Look, your worship."

And, rummaging at the bottom of his pocket, he pulled out the little piece of string.

But the incredulous mayor shook his head.

"You will not make me believe, Master Hauchecorne, that Master Malandain, who is a man worthy of all respect, has taken this bit of cord for a pocket-book."

The peasant, furious, raised his hand, and spit at his side to bear witness to his honour, repeating,

"F'r all that, it's God's truth, holy truth, your worship. There! My soul and my salvation knows it's true!"

The mayor resumed:

"After having picked the article up, you even searched also a long while in the mud to make sure if any money had fallen out of it."

The good man choked with rage and terror.

"If them can say—if them can say—such lies as that to take away an honest man's name! If them can say——"

However he might protest, he was not believed.

He was confronted by Master Malandain, who repeated and supported his statement. They railed at each other for an hour. Master Hauchecorne demanded that they search his pockets. Nothing was found upon him.

Finally, the mayor, very much perplexed, let

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him go with the warning that he would inform the public prosecutor, and ask for orders.

The news had spread abroad. When he came out of the mayor's office, the old man was the centre of curiosity and questioning, both serious and jeering, but into which not the least resentment entered. And he began recounting the long rigmarole of the string. They did not believe him. They grinned.

He went along, stopped by every one, or accosting his acquaintances, going over and over his story and his protestations, pointing to his pockets turned inside out to prove he had nothing.

They said to him:

"Come now, you old rascal!"

And he became angry, exasperated, feverish, disconsolate at being doubted, and forever telling his story.

Night fell. It became time to go home. He started out with three of his neighbours, to whom he pointed out the spot where he had picked up the bit of string; and, all along the road, he recited his adventure.

That evening, he made a round of the village of Bréauté so as to tell everyone. He found only unbelievers.

He was ill of it all through the night.

The next day about one in the afternoon Marius Paumelle, a farm helper of Master Breton, the market-gardener at Ymauville, re-

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turned the pocket-book and its contents to Master Houlbrèque of Manneville.

This man maintained he had found it on the road, but, not knowing how to read, had carried it home, and turned it over to his master.

The news spread to the suburbs. Master Hauchecorne was informed. Immediately, he set himself the task of going about relating his story, capping it with this climax. He was triumphant.

"What hurt me the mostest," he said, "was not the thing itself, don't you see, but the lies. Nothing hurts so as when's lies told about you."

All day long he talked of his adventure. He told it on the roads to the people passing, at the tavern to people who were drinking, and then to the people coming out of church the next Sunday. He even stopped strangers to tell them the tale. He felt relieved by this time, yet something troubled him without his knowing just what it was. People had a mocking manner as they listened. They did not appear convinced. He almost felt their tattle behind his back.

Tuesday of the next week, he went to the Goderville market, solely impelled by the need of recounting his affair.

Malandain, standing in his doorway, began to laugh as he saw him pass. For what?

He accosted a farmer of Criquetot who did not permit him to finish, but, landing him a thump in the pit of the stomach, cried in his

## The Piece of String

face, "Get out, you great rogue!" Then he turned on his heel.

Master Hauchecorne, altogether abashed, grew more and more disturbed. Why had he been dubbed "a great rogue"?

When seated at table in Jourdain's tavern, he again began to explain the particulars.

A Montvilliers horse-dealer yelled at him:

"Don't tell me, you old fox! I know your piece of string yarn!"

Hauchecorne stammered, "B—b—but it's found, the pocket-book!"

To which the other retorted:

"That'll do, daddy! There's one who finds, and another who gives up. Neither is no one the wiser."

The peasant was choked off. At last, he understood. They accused him of having had the pocket-book returned by a crony—by an accomplice.

He tried to protest. The whole table started to laugh.

He could not finish his meal, and took his leave amidst their mocking and derision.

He returned to his home, ashamed and indignant, stifled with rage, with confusion; all the more dejected because, with his Norman cunning, he was capable of having done what they accused him of, and even of bragging of it as a good trick. His innocence vaguely appeared to him as impossible to prove; his roguery was too well known. And he felt

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struck to the heart by the injustice of the suspicion.

Again he commenced to tell of his adventure; every day its recital lengthened, each time containing new proofs, more energetic protestations, and more solemn oaths which he prepared in his solitary hours. His mind was altogether occupied by the story of the piece of string. He was believed all the less as his defence grew more complicated and his arguments more artful.

"Now, those are the proofs of a liar," they said behind his back.

He felt this. It consumed his strength. He exhausted himself in useless efforts.

He went into a visible decline.

The jokers now made him detail the story of "The Piece of String" to amuse them, just as you persuade a soldier who has come through a campaign to tell his version of a battle. At last, his mind began to give way.

Near the end of December he took to his bed.

He died the first week in January, and, in the delirium of the throes of death, he protested his innocence, repeating, "A little piece of string —little piece of string—see, here it is, your worship."

## A PASSION IN THE DESERT

BY

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

"WHAT a frightful exhibition!" she exclaimed, as we were leaving the menagerie of M. Martin, where she had just been watching that intrepid performer—to use the expression of the advertisement—"working" with his hyena.

"By what means," she continued, "can he have trained his animals so well that he is sufficiently certain of their affection to——?"

"Why," I interrupted, "what seems such an enigma to you is really very natural."

"Oh!" she exclaimed with an incredulous smile.

"Do you consider beasts entirely without passions?" I asked. "If so, let me assure you it is in our power to teach them all the vices which belong to our own state of civilisation."

She looked at me in astonishment.

"However," I resumed, "when I saw M. Martin for the first time, I confess that I, like you, uttered an exclamation of surprise. I was standing at the time beside an old soldier who had come in with me, and whose appearance I found very interesting. His right leg had been amputated; his head, with its fearless poise,

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was marked with the scars of war, and told of Napoleon's battles. There was a certain frankness and good humour about this old veteran which prejudiced me at once in his favour. No doubt, he was one of those troopers whom nothing can surprise; who find something amusing even in the dying spasms of a comrade, and shroud him or strip him with equal want of compunction; who are proof against bullets, quick to reach conclusions, and who hold fellowship with the Devil. He had watched the proprietor of the menagerie very attentively, and, as the latter was leaving the cage, my companion's face assumed an expression of mocking disdain such as the wise assume to distinguish themselves from ordinary fools.

"When I made a remark about the courage of M. Martin, he smiled in a knowing way, and answered with a toss of his head:

"'Oh, that is a well-known trick.'

"'How is that? I should be much obliged, indeed, to have you explain the secret of it,' I rejoined.

"After a few minutes spent in getting acquainted, we went to dine at the first restaurant we found. A bottle of champagne with the dessert brought back past events to the mind of this curious old soldier with wonderful clearness, and he told me his story. I understood then why he could say 'a well-known trick.'"

When we reached her home, she coaxed me so much, and made so many promises, that I

## A Passion in the Desert

consented to write the tale of the old soldier, and the next day she received the following episode from an epic which might properly be entitled, "The French in Egypt."

At the time of the explorating tour of General Desaix into upper Egypt, a Provencal soldier had fallen into the hands of the Maugrabins, and was carried off by these Arabs into the desert beyond the Falls of the Nile. In order to put a safe distance between themselves and the French army, the Maugrabins proceeded by forced marches, and did not stop until evening. They pitched their camp about a well, surrounded by a fringe of palm-trees, near which they had previously buried some provisions. As they suspected no plans of escape on the part of their prisoner, they contented themselves with tying his hands, and, after having eaten some dried dates and given fodder to the horses, they went to sleep.

However, when the brave fellow saw that his enemies were no longer watching him, he secured a scimetar with the aid of his teeth, and, holding the blade between his knees, he cut the cords depriving him of the use of his hands, and was free. He lost no time in taking possession of a rifle and a dagger, and providing himself with a hatchet, a supply of dried dates, a small sack of fodder, some powder and balls, he mounted a horse and spurred away in the direction of the French camp. His horse, however, was weary

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from the day's travel, and, as the Frenchman was anxious to be once more safe in camp, he urged the poor animal on until, with its flanks torn by the spurs, it fell dead from exhaustion, leaving its rider in the midst of the desert.

For some time he proceeded on foot through the sand with all the desperation of a galley slave seeking freedom, but was obliged to stop as darkness was coming on, and notwithstanding the splendour of the oriental heavens at night, he was too tired to go on. Fortunately, he had been able to reach a hillock at the summit of which grew a number of palms, the foliage of which had been visible a long way off, and had awakened in the heart of the weary traveller the most pleasant anticipations. His exhaustion was so great that he threw himself down on a stone, shaped by capricious nature into the form of a camp-bed, and went to sleep without precautions of any kind for self-defence. He had risked his life, but his last thought was one of regret. He already repented of leaving the Maugrabins, whose wandering life began to appeal to him, now that he was helpless and far away from them.

He was awakened by the sun, its rays falling perpendicularly on the stone and heating it to an intolerable degree. Unfortunately, the soldier had taken his position on the side of the palms opposite to that on which the shadow of the foliage fell. He looked at those solitary trees, and was struck by their familiar appearance:

## A Passion in the Desert

they recalled to his mind the elegant shafts and crowns, the long leaves, characteristic of the cathedral of Arles.

Having counted the trees, he began to look about him, and the deepest despondency took possession of his soul. He saw before him a boundless ocean. In every direction, as far as the eye could reach, the sands of the desert glittered like the blade of a lance in a strong light. He could not tell whether it was a sea of glass, or a thousand lakes smooth like a mirror. Carried along in waves, a fiery vapour whirled over the shifting sand. The oriental sky shone in its hopeless brazenness; nothing was left for the imagination to supply. Heaven and earth were on fire.

The silence was fearful in its weird and terrible majesty. The infinity and boundlessness of the whole oppressed the soul on every side. Not a cloud in the sky; not a breath in the air; not an incident to break the monotony on the wide expanse of those still, rippled sands. The horizon, like that of the open sea in fair weather, was marked by a line of light as straight and thin as if cut with the blade of a sword. The soldier embraced the trunk of one of the palms as if it were the body of a friend. Then, in the shelter of the straight, slender shadow which the tree cast upon the rock, he wept. Thus he remained for a time, looking with deep sadness upon the inexorable scene presented to his view. He called aloud as if to

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sound the solitude, but his voice, almost lost in the hollows of the hillock, came back with hardly an echo. The echo was in his own heart. The man was only twenty years old, yet he loaded his rifle—

"There is always time enough for that," he said to himself, as he replaced the weapon of deliverance on the ground beside him.

Looking about, now at the dusky earth and now at the blue sky, the soldier began to dream of France. He recalled with almost a sense of pleasure the ill-smelling gutters of Paris; he saw again the towns through which they had passed, the faces of his comrades, and the most trifling incidents of his life.

His southern imagination represented to him the stones of his beloved Provence in the waves of heat, undulating over what seemed to be a cloth spread in the desert. Fearing the dangers of a mirage to his reason, he descended the hillock upon the side opposite the one he had climbed the evening before. Here he made a discovery which made him rejoice. It was a sort of cave, formed by nature among the immense fragments of rock composing the hillock. The remnants of a mat told that this place of refuge had been made use of at some time. Furthermore, he perceived some date-palms, loaded with fruit, only a short distance away. Then the instinct which causes a human being to cling to life began to assert itself. He found himself hoping that he would live

## A Passion in the Desert

until some band of Maugrabs should pass that way, or perhaps he would hear the roar of cannon, for at that very hour Napoleon was on his march through Egypt.

Cheered by this thought, the Frenchman proceeded to bring down some of the clusters of ripe fruit under the weight of which the date-palms seemed to bend. The flavour of this unlooked-for manna convinced him that the former occupant of the cave had cultivated the palms, the fresh, luscious pulp proclaiming his predecessor's skill.

The Frenchman's state of mind was suddenly changed from abject despair to almost silly joy. He once more climbed the hill, and, during the remainder of the day, busied himself with cutting down one of the sterile trees which had afforded him shelter the night before. A vague reminiscence brought to his mind the thought of wild beasts of the desert, and, surmising the probability of their coming to drink from the spring which issued from the rock on which he lived, but which was soon swallowed up by the desert sand, he determined to insure himself against their visits by placing a barrier across the entrance to his hermitage. In spite of his industry, however, and the strength which fear of being devoured by wild animals, during sleep, gave him, he found it impossible to cut the tree into several pieces that day; but he did succeed in felling it. When, toward evening, this king of the sand tumbled down, the noise

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of its fall resounded in the distance, and the very solitude seemed to groan. The soldier trembled as if he had heard a voice pronouncing a curse upon him, but, like the heir who does not long mourn the death of a relative, he cut away from the splendid tree the great, green fronds which are its picturesque ornament, and made use of them in repairing the mat upon which he intended to spend the night. Fatigued by the heat and labour of the day, he was soon sleeping soundly beneath the reddish ceiling of the damp cave.

In the middle of the night, his sleep was broken by a peculiar sound. He sat upright, and the profound stillness enabled him to recognise the sound of breathing—but too deep and powerful to come from the chest of a human being.

Profound fear, further augmented by the darkness, the silence and the working of his imagination, chilled his heart. He felt his hair stand on end. By straining his eyes until they almost started from their sockets, he perceived in the darkness two faint yellow lights. At first, he attributed these to the reflection of the fruit he had gathered, but soon the remarkable brilliancy of the night aided him by degrees to distinguish the objects about him in the cave, and he saw an enormous animal, lying on the ground a couple of feet away.

Was it a lion—a tiger—a crocodile?

The Frenchman's education was not sufficient to help him determine to what species his enemy

## A Passion in the Desert

belonged, but his fear was only the greater as his ignorance allowed him to imagine all kinds of combined evils. He endured the torture of listening to the breath of the animal coming and going, not losing a sound, and not daring to make the least movement.

An odour like that of a fox, only much more penetrating, heavier so to speak, filled the cave, and, when the Frenchman had blown it from his nostrils, his terror was supreme, for he could then no longer question the reality of that terrible companion's presence, in whose royal dwelling he had encamped. Soon the reflection of the light, breaking in the east, illuminated the den, and produced an almost imperceptible lustre on the resplendent and spotted skin of a panther. This specimen of the Egyptian lion slept rolled up like a great dog occupying a comfortable berth at the door of his master's house. Its face was turned toward the Frenchman; its eyes opened for a moment, then closed again.

A thousand confused thoughts passed through the mind of the panther's prisoner. First, he wanted to kill it with a shot from his rifle, but he saw that there was not enough space between them to enable him to use this means, as the muzzle of the gun would reach beyond the animal. And if it should awaken! That thought rendered him motionless.

He could hear the beating of his heart in the midst of the silence, and cursed the pulsation

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caused by the rush of blood through his veins, dreading to disturb the sleep which afforded him an opportunity to plan an escape. He put both his hands on the scimetar with the idea of severing the head of his enemy, but the difficulty of cutting that tough skin, covered with dense hair, led him to give up the idea. To attempt flight would be certain death, he thought.

He preferred the chances of a fight, and decided to wait until daylight. He did not have long to wait. The Frenchman was now able to examine the panther more closely, and noticed that its muzzle was covered with blood.

"She has just eaten," he thought, not taking the pains to consider whether the feast had been human flesh or not. "She won't be hungry when she wakes."

It was a female. The fur on her belly and thighs was glistening white, and several velvet-like spots formed pretty bracelets about her paws. The muscular tail was of the same whiteness, but had a series of black rings encircling the end. The upper skin, yellow like unburnished gold, and very sleek and soft, bore the characteristic spots, shaded in the form of rosettes, which distinguish the panther from other branches of the cat family.

His calm, formidable hostess was snoring away as contentedly as a household puss asleep on an ottoman. Her bloody paws, sinewy and well armed, were stretched out in front of

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her, and her head, with its straight parted beard like threads of gold, rested upon them.

If she had appeared thus in a cage, the Frenchman would certainly have admired the grace of the brute and the marked contrast of pronounced colours, which gave a royal splendour to her robe; but at that moment his appreciation of these points was marred by the threatening prospect.

At the presence of the panther, even though she slept, he experienced the effect which the magnetic eyes of a serpent are said to produce upon a nightingale.

The soldier's courage failed him before this peril, though it would doubtless have been roused by cannon belching forth fire and shell. After all, a single courageous idea filled his mind, and dried the cold perspiration rolling down his forehead. As in the case of men whom misfortune drives to a point where they defy death, he saw, without being conscious of it, a tragedy in this adventure, and determined to play his rôle with honour to the end.

"The day before yesterday, the Arabs might have killed me," he soliloquised, and, considering himself as dead, he awaited bravely, but with lively curiosity, the awakening of his enemy.

When the sun rose, the panther suddenly opened her eyes, stretched out her legs as if to dissipate the cramp, and yawned--by this last operation displaying a formidable set of teeth and a grooved, rasp-like tongue.

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"Why, she acts like a coquette," thought the Frenchman, as he watched her rolling about, performing the prettiest and daintiest movements imaginable. She licked the blood-stains from her paws and muzzle, and stroked her head several times very gently.

"Well, I suppose I might make my toilet, too," said the Frenchman to himself, as his reviving courage somewhat restored his sense of humour. "We are going to wish each other good morning." With this remark, he possessed himself of the dagger stolen from the Mau-grabins.

At this moment, the panther turned her head toward the Frenchman, and looked at him steadily. The fixedness of those steely eyes and their almost intolerable glare made the man shudder the more so as the animal began to approach him. But he looked at her affectionately, and, fixing his eyes upon her, as if he wished to mesmerise her, he permitted her to come very close; then he passed his hand along her body from head to tail, stroking her as gently and lovingly as if he were caressing a beautiful woman. He could feel the projections which marked the vertebræ of her supple spine; the animal raised her tail at the agreeable sensation, and the expression of her eyes became more gentle. When the Frenchman repeated this interesting blandishment for the third time, she began to purr as our cats do when expressing pleasure. But the sound coming from the

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The throat of this animal was so deep and strong that it reverberated through the cave like the low notes of a church organ. The soldier, understanding the value of his caresses, redoubled them in his efforts to intoxicate this exacting courtesan.

When he felt sure of having allayed the ferocity of his capricious companion, whose hunger had so fortunately been satisfied the night before, he arose and left the cave. The panther permitted his departure, to be sure, but, when he had climbed the hill, she bounded after him with the lightness of a sparrow hopping from branch to branch, and rubbed herself against his legs, at the same time curving her back like a cat. She looked at her visitor with a much less savage expression, and uttered that peculiar sound which naturalists compare to the grating of a saw. "She certainly is exacting," thought the Frenchman, with a smile.

He tried playing with her ears, stroked her belly, and scratched her head briskly with his nails, and, perceiving his success, even pricked her skull with the point of his dagger, intending to kill her at once. But the hardness of the bone caused him to doubt the success of such an attempt.

This sultana of the desert gave evidence of her appreciation of the efforts of her slave by raising her head and stretching her neck, giving further proof of her pleasure by the contented attitude she assumed. It suddenly occurred

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to the Frenchman that, in order to slay this savage princess with a single blow, he must stab her in the throat, and he raised his arm accordingly. Then the panther, doubtless sated with his caresses, laid herself gently at his feet, giving him a glance now and then which, in spite of her natural ferocity of expression, bore a certain amount of good-will. The poor fellow ate his dates, leaning against a tree, looking now across the desert in search or a deliverer, and then again at the panther to assure himself of her uncertain clemency. The panther looked suspiciously at the ground where the date stones fell, as he dropped them one by one. She watched the movements of the Frenchman with businesslike care. The conclusion reached as the result of her observation of him must have been favourable. When he had finished his meal, she began licking his shoes, completely removing the dust caked in the wrinkles of the leather, with her long, rough tongue.

"Ah, but when she gets hungry!" thought the soldier. In spite of the uneasiness which this thought gave him, he became absorbed in measuring the proportions of the panther with his eyes. She was certainly one of the finest specimens of her class, being not less than three feet in height and five in length, not counting her tail. This powerful member was fully three feet long, and rounded like a cudgel. Her head, as large as that of a lioness, gave

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indications of great shrewdness, and, although the cold cruelty characteristic of the tiger family dominated its expression, there was in the effect of it something which made him think of a clever woman. The whole appearance of this solitary queen suggested the gayety of a drunken Nero. She had quenched her thirst with blood, and now wished to be amused.

The soldier tried walking back and forth, which the panther allowed, contenting herself with following him with her eyes. She seemed less like a faithful dog, however, than a great angora, suspicious of everything, even her master's movements. In looking about, he saw the carcass of his horse beside the spring, whither the panther had dragged it. About two-thirds of it was eaten. This discovery somewhat reassured the Frenchman; it was no trouble now to explain the absence of the panther on the evening before and the respect she had shown for him during his sleep.

Fortune having so far favoured him, he resolved to take his chances for the future. His purpose was to remain peaceably with the panther for the rest of the day, neglecting no opportunity of taming her and winning her favour.

Having decided upon his plan, he returned to her, and had the great satisfaction of seeing her wag her tail slightly. He sat down beside her, and began to play with her, holding her paws and her muzzle, turning back her ears

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rolling her over on her back, and rubbing her soft, warm sides. She evidently enjoyed these attentions, and, when he stroked the fur on her paws, she carefully drew in her curved claws.

The Frenchman, who throughout this performance had kept one hand on his dagger, still thought of plunging it into the side of the over-confident panther, but feared being killed by her during her death-struggle. On the other hand, he was conscious of a touch of pity moving him to spare such a harmless creature.

It seemed as though he had found a friend in that boundless desert. He thought of his first mistress, whom he had called "Mignon," by way of antithesis, for she was of such an atrociously jealous disposition that, during all the time that their passion lasted, he had lived in constant fear of the knife with which she threatened him. This reminiscence of his youth suggested the idea of naming the panther whose agility, grace, and gentleness he admired in proportion as his fear decreased.

By evening, he had become accustomed to his perilous position, and almost liked the danger of it. The education of his companion meanwhile had so far progressed that she would look at him when he called "Mignon" in a falsetto voice. At sunset, Mignon uttered a strangely melancholy cry, which she repeated several times.

"She has been well brought up," thought the soldier. "She is saying her prayers." This



HONORÉ DE BALZAC



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mental pleasantry, however, only occurred to him at the sight of the peaceful attitude his companion had resumed.

"Come now, my little blonde, I am going to let you retire first," said he, trusting to the nimbleness of his legs to get as far away as possible and to seek another place of shelter when she should be asleep.

Impatiently he awaited the time for flight, and, when it came, he ran away rapidly in the direction of the Nile. But he had not gone half a mile before he heard the panther bounding along behind him, giving forth that saw-like cry already described, which seemed even more fearful than the sound of her feet.

"Ah!" he said, "she's in love with me. She never met any one before, and it is most flattering to be her first love."

At that moment, the Frenchman struck one of those treacherous quicksands so dangerous to travellers, and from which it is impossible to escape. Upon finding himself trapped, he cried out in terror, but the panther seized him by the collar, and, quickly leaping backward, she pulled him out of the sandy whirlpool as if by magic.

"Ah, Mignon," cried the soldier, caressing the panther enthusiastically, "we will stick together now, come what will, and no more tricks."

From that time forth, the desert seemed inhabited. It held a being to which the Frenchman could speak, whose ferocity he had quelled.

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yet not knowing the secret of its strange affection for him. However great his desire to remain awake and on his guard, sleep soon overcame him, and held him until morning.

When he awoke, Mignon was gone. He climbed the hill, and saw her in the distance, bounding along in the characteristic manner of animals whose extremely supple vertebral column prevents their running in the usual way. Mignon came up with her mouth covered with blood. She received the caresses of her companion with supreme satisfaction, betrayed by her deep purring. Her eyes were quite softened now as she turned them with even more gentleness than on the preceding evening to the Frenchman; and he spoke to her as if she were a domestic animal.

"Aha, young lady, you really are a fine girl, aren't you, now? Are you not ashamed of yourself? Have you eaten some poor Mau-grabin this morning? Well, never mind; they are only brutes like yourself. But you are not going to eat up the French? If you do, I shall not love you any more."

She played with him just as a puppy plays with its master, allowing him to roll her over, to beat her or pat her in turn; and she even solicited his attention by putting out her paw to him.

Several days passed thus. The character of his associate permitted the Frenchman to admire the sublime beauties of the desert

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without interruption. Here he had experienced hours of trouble as well as hours of rest, had found food and a creature to think about, and the variety of his impressions called forth conflicting emotions. He discovered beauties, unknown to the world at large, in the rising and setting of the sun. He knew the thrill experienced at the whir produced by the wings of a passing bird—though such visitors were rare. He had watched the beauty of the colours blending in the clouds which at rare intervals passed over his place of refuge. At night, he studied the effect of the moonlight on the sand, as the simoon made undulating, rapidly changing waves. He admired the wonderful brilliancy of the oriental day, yet, after witnessing the terrible sight of a hurricane upon those wide plains where the shifting sands formed dry mists and fatal storms, he hailed with delight the advent of the evening and the refreshing softness of the starlight. Solitude led him to open the storehouses of dreams. He spent whole hours thinking of mere nothings, or comparing his past mode of life with the present. He became very fond of the panther, as his nature demanded some object upon which to lavish his affection.

Whether the influence of the rational mind through the effort of his will had subdued the savage nature of his associate, or whether she found plenty of victims in the desert to satisfy her hunger, she respected the life of the Frenchman, whose suspicions of her waned as she

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of his became tamer. He spent the greater part of the time sleeping, but was obliged to keep a lookout, like a spider watching her web, lest he should allow any opportunity of deliverance to pass by. He utilised his shirt as a flag of distress, hoisting it to the top of a palm-tree stripped of its foliage; but he was obliged to stretch it by means of sticks, for fear the breeze might not be sufficiently strong to unfurl it when a traveller should look in his direction.

During the long hours when hope deserted him, he amused himself with the panther. He learned to understand the inflections of her voice and to interpret the significance of her glance. He studied the curiously designed spots which covered her skin and gave it the appearance of rippling gold. Mignon no longer even growled when he took the end of her tail in his hand to count the black and white rings which surrounded it, and which appeared at a distance like an ornament of precious stones. It gave him pleasure to watch the graceful lines of her form, the snowy whiteness of her belly, and the handsomely shaped head. But he was especially fond of following her motions when she was at play, ever surprised at the ease and youthfulness of her movements. He admired the supple grace with which she bounded, squatted, rolled, crawled along, and suddenly leaped as though attacking an enemy. Yet, no matter how great her speed or how slippery the

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block of granite underfoot, she would stop short at the call of "Mignon."

One day, a great bird was circling about in the sunlight overhead. When the soldier left his panther to examine this new guest, the deserted sultana voiced her displeasure in a low growl.

"The deuce! I believe she is jealous," thought the Frenchman, as he saw her eyes become fixed and glaring. "Certainly, the soul of Virginia might have passed into that body."

The eagle disappeared in the ether, while the soldier stood admiring the crouching figure of the panther. How much grace and youth there was in every line of her body! She was as beautiful as a woman. The light yellow of her fur gradually paled on each side until, on the inner surface of her thighs, it was blended into a dull white, and the sunlight falling full upon her changed the brown rosettes to a golden hue infinitely beautiful in effect.

The man and the panther exchanged a look which seemed to be one of mutual understanding. The coquette trembled with delight when she felt the nails of her lover scratching her head. Her eyes became luminous, and then closed.

"I believe she has a soul, after all," said the soldier, studying the calmness of this queen of the desert, the colour of whose yellow and white

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sands she wore, whose intense heat and solitude she personified.

"Well," she told me, "I have read your plea in favour of animals. Those two seemed to understand each other so well; how did their friendship end?"

"Like all great passions—in a misunderstanding. One suspects the other. One is too proud to ask for an explanation, and the other too stubborn to offer it."

"And to think sometimes a mere look or exclamation at the proper time is sufficient. But finish your story."

"It is exceedingly difficult, but I will tell it as the old warrior told it to me. When he had finished the bottle of champagne, he exclaimed:

"I don't know what I had done, but she turned about as if enraged, and with her sharp teeth scratched my thigh, very slightly to be sure; but I, thinking she was about to devour me, plunged my dagger into her throat. She rolled over with a cry which froze my very heart. In her death-struggle, she turned her eyes toward me. They showed no trace of anger. I would have given the world at that moment, had it been mine, or my cross, which I did not yet possess, to restore her to life. I felt as if I had murdered a human being—a friend. The soldiers who had seen my flag of distress, and had come to my rescue, found me in tears.

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"Well," he continued, after a moment's silence, "I have fought in Germany, Spain, Russia, and France, and have seen a great deal of the world, but nothing like the desert. Ah! that is beautiful—beyond compare!"

"Could you be contented there?"

"Oh! that doesn't follow, young man. I do not always mourn the loss of my group of palms and my panther, but I must think of them at times, and thinking makes me sad. You see, in the desert there is everything and nothing."

"What do you mean?"

"Well," he answered, with an impatient gesture, "God is there—man is not."

## THE SNOWSTORM

BY

ALEXANDER SERGEIVITCH PUSHKIN

TOWARD the end of the year 1811, a memorable period for us, the good Gavril Gavrilovitch R—— was living on his domain of Nenaradova. He was celebrated throughout the district for his hospitality and kind-heartedness. The neighbours were constantly visiting him: some to eat and drink; some to play at five copeck "Boston" with his wife, Praskovia Petrovna; and some to look at their daughter, Maria Gavrilovna, a pale, slender girl of seventeen. She was considered a wealthy match, and many desired her for themselves or for their sons.

Maria Gavrilovna had been brought up on French novels, and, consequently, was in love. The object of her choice was a poor sublieutenant in the army, who was then on leave of absence in his village. It need scarcely be mentioned that the young man returned her passion with equal ardour, and that the parents of his beloved one, observing their mutual inclination, forbade their daughter to think of him, and received him worse than a discharged assessor.

Our lovers corresponded with each other, and, in the little pine wood or near the old chapel

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daily saw each other alone. There they exchanged vows of eternal love, lamented their cruel fate, and formed various plans. Corresponding and conversing in this way, they arrived quite naturally at the following conclusion:

If we cannot exist without each other, and the will of hard-hearted parents stands in the way of our happiness, why cannot we do without them?

Needless to mention that this happy idea originated in the mind of the young man, and that it was very congenial to the romantic imagination of Maria Gavrilovna.

The winter came and put a stop to their meetings, but their correspondence became all the more active. Vladimir Nikolaievitch in every letter implored her to give herself up to him, to get married secretly, to hide for some time, and then throw themselves at the feet of their parents, who would, without any doubt, be touched at last by the heroic constancy and unhappiness of the lovers, and would infallibly say to them, "Children, come to our arms!"

Maria Gavrilovna hesitated for a long time, and several plans for a flight were rejected. At last, she consented: on the appointed day, she was not to take supper, but was to retire to her room under the pretext of a headache. Her maid was in the plot; they were both to go into the garden by the back stairs, and, behind the garden, they would find ready a sledge, into which they were to get, and then drive straight to the church of Jadrino, a village about five versts from

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Nenaradova, where Vladimir would be waiting for them.

On the eve of the decisive day, Maria Gavrilovna did not sleep the whole night; she packed and tied up her linen and other articles of apparel, wrote a long letter to a sentimental young lady, a friend of hers, and another to her parents. She took leave of them in the most touching terms, urged the invincible strength of passion as an excuse for the step she was taking, and wound up with the assurance that she should consider it the happiest moment of her life when she should be allowed to throw herself at the feet of her dear parents.

After having sealed both letters with a Toula seal, upon which were engraved two flaming hearts with a suitable inscription, she threw herself upon her bed just before daybreak, and dozed off; but, even then, she was constantly being awakened by terrible dreams. First, it seemed to her that, at the very moment when she seated herself in the sledge, in order to go and get married, her father stopped her, dragged her over the snow with fearful rapidity, and threw her into a dark, bottomless abyss, down which she fell headlong with an indescribable sinking of the heart. Then she saw Vladimir lying on the grass, pale and blood-stained. With his dying breath, he implored her in a piercing voice to make haste and marry him. Other wild and fantastic visions floated before her, one after another. At last, she arose, paler than usual, and with a genuine

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headache. Her father and mother observed her uneasiness; their tender solicitude and incessant inquiries, "What is the matter with you, Masha? Are you ill, Masha?" cut her to the heart. She tried to reassure them and to appear cheerful; but in vain.

The evening came. The thought that this was the last day she would pass in the bosom of her family weighed upon her heart. She was more dead than alive. In secret she took leave of everybody, of all the objects that surrounded her.

Supper was served; her heart began to beat violently. In a trembling voice, she declared that she did not want any supper, and then took leave of her father and mother. They kissed her and blessed her as usual, and she could hardly restrain herself from weeping.

On reaching her own room, she threw herself into a chair and burst into tears. Her maid urged her to be calm and to take courage. Everything was ready. In half an hour, Masha would leave forever her parents' house, her room, and her peaceful girlish life.

Out in the courtyard, the snow was falling heavily; the wind howled, the shutters shook and rattled, and everything seemed to her to portend misfortune.

Soon all was quiet in the house: every one was asleep. Masha wrapped herself in a shawl, put on a warm cloak, took her small box in her hand, and went down the back staircase. Her maid

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followed her with two bundles. They descended into the garden. The snowstorm had not subsided; the wind blew in their faces, as if trying to stop the young criminal. With difficulty, they reached the end of the garden. In the road, a sledge awaited them. The horses, half-frozen with the cold, would not keep still; Vladimir's coachman was walking up and down in front of them, trying to restrain their impatience. He helped the young lady and her maid into the sledge, placed the box and the bundles in the vehicle, seized the reins, and the horses dashed off.

Having intrusted the young lady to the care of fate and to the skill of Tereshka, the coachman, we will return to our young lover.

Vladimir had spent the whole of the day in driving about. In the morning, he paid a visit to the priest of Jadrino, and, having come to an agreement with him after a great deal of difficulty, he then set out to seek for witnesses among the neighbouring land-owners. The first to whom he presented himself, a retired cornet of about forty years of age, and whose name was Dravin, consented with pleasure. The adventure, he declared, reminded him of his young days and his pranks in the hussars. He persuaded Vladimir to stay to dinner with him, and assured him that he would have no difficulty in finding the other two witnesses. And, indeed, immediately after dinner appeared the surveyor Schmidt, with moustache and spurs, and the son of the

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captain of police, a lad of sixteen years of age, who had recently entered the lancers. They not only accepted Vladimir's proposal, but even vowed that they were ready to sacrifice their lives for him. Vladimir embraced them with rapture, and returned home to get everything ready.

It had been dark for some time. He despatched his faithful Tereshka to Nenaradova with his sledge and with detailed instructions, and ordered for himself the small sledge with one horse, and set out alone, without any coachman, for Jadrino, where Maria Gavrilovna ought to arrive in about a couple of hours. He knew the road well, and the journey would only occupy about twenty minutes altogether.

But scarcely had Vladimir issued from the paddock into the open field, when the wind rose, and such a snowstorm came on that he could see nothing. In one minute the road was completely hidden; all surrounding objects disappeared in a thick yellow fog, through which fell the white flakes of snow; earth and sky became confounded. Vladimir found himself in the middle of the field, and tried in vain to find the road again. His horse went on at random, and at every moment kept either stepping into a snow-drift or stumbling into a hole, so that the sledge was constantly being overturned. Vladimir endeavoured not to lose the right direction. But it seemed to him that more than half an hour had already passed, and he had not yet reached the

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Jadrino wood. Another ten minutes elapsed—still no wood was to be seen. Vladimir drove across a field intersected by deep ditches. The snowstorm did not abate; the sky did not become any clearer. The horse began to grow tired, and the perspiration rolled from him in great drops, in spite of the fact that he was constantly being half-buried in the snow.

At last, Vladimir perceived that he was going in the wrong direction. He stopped, began to think, to recollect, and compare, and he felt convinced that he ought to have turned to the right. He turned to the right now. His horse could scarcely move forward. He had now been on the road for more than an hour. Jadrino could not be far off. But on and on he went, and still no end to the field—nothing but snowdrifts and ditches. The sledge was constantly being overturned, and as constantly being set right again. The time was passing. Vladimir began to grow seriously uneasy.

At last, something dark appeared in the distance. Vladimir directed his course toward it. On drawing near, he perceived that it was a wood.

"Thank Heaven!" he thought, "I am not far off now."

He drove along by the edge of the wood, hoping by-and-by to fall upon the well-known road or to pass round the wood: Jadrino was situated just behind it. He soon found the road, and plunged into the darkness of the wood, now denuded of

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leaves by the winter. The wind could not rage here; the road was smooth; the horse recovered courage, and Vladimir felt reassured.

But he drove on and on, and Jadrino was not to be seen; there was no end to the wood. Vladimir discovered with horror that he had entered an unknown forest. Despair took possession of him. He whipped the horse; the poor animal broke into a trot, but it soon slackened its pace, and in about a quarter of an hour it was scarcely able to drag one leg after the other, in spite of all the exertions of the unfortunate Vladimir.

Gradually the trees began to get sparser, and Vladimir emerged from the forest; but Jadrino was not to be seen. It must now have been about midnight. Tears gushed from his eyes; he drove on at random. Meanwhile, the storm had subsided, the clouds dispersed, and before him lay a level plain covered with a white, undulating carpet. The night was tolerably clear. He saw, not far off, a little village, consisting of four or five houses. Vladimir drove toward it. At the first cottage, he jumped out of the sledge, ran to the window, and began to knock. After a few minutes the wooden shutter was raised and an old man thrust out his grey beard.

"What do you want?"

"Is Jadrino far from here?"

"Is Jadrino far from here?"

"Yes, yes! Is it far?"

"Not far; about ten versts."

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At this reply, Vladimir grasped his hair, and stood motionless like a man condemned to death.

"Where do you come from?" continued the old man.

Vladimir had not the courage to answer the question.

"Listen, old man," said he; "can you procure me horses to take me to Jadrino?"

"How should we have such things as horses?" replied the peasant.

"Can I obtain a guide? I will pay him whatever he pleases."

"Wait," said the old man, closing the shutter; "I will send my son out to you; he will guide you."

Vladimir waited. But a minute had scarcely elapsed when he began knocking again. The shutter was raised, and the beard again appeared.

"What do you want?"

"What about your son?"

"He'll be out presently; he is putting on his boots. Are you cold? Come in and warm yourself."

"Thank you; send your son out quickly."

The door creaked: a lad came out with a cudgel and went on in front, at one time pointing out the road, at another searching for it among the drifted snow.

"What is the time?" Vladimir asked him.

"It will soon be daylight," replied the young peasant. Vladimir spoke not another word.

The cocks were crowing and it was already

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light when they reached Jadrino. The church was closed. Vladimir paid the guide, and drove into the priest's courtyard. His sledge was not there. What news awaited him!

But let us return to the worthy proprietors of Nenaradova, and see what is happening there.

Nothing.

The old people awoke, and went into the parlour, Gavril Gavrilovitch in a night-cap and flannel doublet, Praskovia Petrovna in a wadded dressing-gown. The tea-urn was brought in, and Gavril Gavrilovitch sent a servant to ask Maria Gavrilovna how she was and how she had passed the night. The servant returned, saying that the young lady had not slept very well, but that she felt better now, and that she would come down presently into the parlour. And, indeed, the door opened, and Maria Gavrilovna entered the room, and wished her father and mother good morning.

"How is your head, Masha?" asked Gavril Gavrilovitch.

"Better, papa," replied Masha.

"Very likely you inhaled the fumes from the charcoal yesterday," said Praskovia Petrovna.

"Very likely, mamma," replied Masha.

The day passed happily enough, but in the night Masha was taken ill. A doctor was sent for from the town. He arrived in the evening, and found the sick girl delirious. A violent fever ensued, and for two weeks the poor patient hovered on the brink of the grave.

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Nobody in the house knew anything about her flight. The letters written by her the evening before had been burnt; and her maid, dreading the wrath of her master, had not whispered a word about it to anybody. The priest, the retired cornet, the moustached surveyor, and the little lancer were discreet, and not without reason. Tereshka, the coachman, never uttered one word too much about it, even when he was drunk. Thus the secret was kept by more than half-a-dozen conspirators.

But Maria Gavrilovna herself divulged her secret during her delirious ravings. But her words were so disconnected that her mother, who never left her bedside, could understand from them only that her daughter was deeply in love with Vladimir Nikolaievitch, and that, probably, love was the cause of her illness. She consulted her husband and some of her neighbours, and at last it was unanimously decided that such was evidently Maria Gavrilovna's fate, that a woman cannot ride away from the man who is destined to be her husband, that poverty is not a crime, that one does not marry wealth, but a man, etc. Moral proverbs are wonderfully useful in those cases where we can invent little in our own justification.

In the meantime, the young lady began to recover. Vladimir had not been seen for a long time in the house of Gavril Gavrilovitch. He was afraid of the usual reception. It was resolved to send and announce to him an unex-

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pected piece of good news: the consent of Maria's parents to his marriage with their daughter. But what was the astonishment of the proprietor of Nenaradova, when, in reply to their invitation, they received from him a half-insane letter. He informed them that he would never set foot in their house again, and begged them to forget an unhappy creature whose only hope was in death. A few days afterward they heard that Vladimir had joined the army again. This was in the year 1812.

For a long time, they did not dare to announce this to Masha, who was now convalescent. She never mentioned the name of Vladimir. Some months afterward, finding his name in the list of those who had distinguished themselves and been severely wounded at Borodino, she fainted away, and it was feared that she would have another attack of fever. But, Heaven be thanked! the fainting fit had no serious consequences.

Another misfortune fell upon her: Gavril Gavrilovitch died, leaving her the heiress to all his property. But the inheritance did not console her; she shared sincerely the grief of poor Praskovia Petrovna, vowing that she would never leave her. They both quitted Nenaradova, the scene of so many sad recollections, and went to live on another estate.

Suitors crowded round the young and wealthy heiress, but she gave not the slightest hope to any of them. Her mother sometimes exhorted her to make a choice; but Maria Gavrilovna shook

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her head, and became pensive. Vladimir no longer existed: he had died in Moscow on the eve of the entry of the French. His memory seemed to be held sacred by Masha; at least, she treasured up everything that could remind her of him —books that he had once read, his drawings, his notes and verses of poetry that he had copied out for her. The neighbours, hearing of all this, were astonished at her constancy, and awaited with curiosity the hero who should at last triumph over the melancholy fidelity of this virgin Artemisia.

Meanwhile, the war had ended gloriously. Our regiments returned from abroad, and the people went out to meet them. The bands played the conquering song, "*Vive Henri-Quatre*," Tyrolean waltzes, and airs from "*Joconde*." Officers, who had set out for the war almost mere lads, returned grown men, with martial air, and breasts decorated with crosses. The soldiers chatted gayly among themselves, constantly mingling French and German words in their speech. Time never to be forgotten! Time of glory and enthusiasm! How throbbed the Russian heart at the word "Fatherland!" How sweet were the tears of meeting! With what unanimity did we commingle feelings of national pride with love for the Czar! And for him—what a moment!

The women, the Russian women, were then incomparable. Their usual coldness disappeared. Their enthusiasm was truly intoxicating,

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when, welcoming the conquerors, they cried  
“Hurrah!” .

What officer of that time does not confess that, to the Russian women, he was indebted for his best and most precious reward?

At this brilliant period, Maria Gavrilovna was living with her mother in the province of — and did not see how both capitals celebrated the return of the troops. But, in the districts and villages, the general enthusiasm was, if possible, even still greater. The appearance of an officer in those places was for him a veritable triumph, and the lover in a plain coat felt very ill at ease in his vicinity.

We have already said that, in spite of her coldness, Maria Gavrilovna was, as before, surrounded by suitors. But all had to retire into the back-ground when the wounded Colonel Bourmin of the hussars, with the order of St. George in his button-hole, and with an “interesting pallor,” as the young ladies of the neighbourhood observed, appeared at the castle. He was about twenty-six years of age. He had obtained leave of absence to visit his estate, which was contiguous to that of Maria Gavrilovna. Maria bestowed special attention upon him. In his presence, her habitual pensiveness disappeared. It cannot be said that she coquettled with him, but a poet, observing her behaviour, would have said:

“*Se amor non è, che dunque ?*”

Bourmin was indeed a very charming young

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man. He possessed that spirit which is eminently pleasing to women: a spirit of decorum and observation, without any pretensions, and yet not without a slight tendency toward careless satire. His behaviour toward Maria Gavrilovna was simple and frank, but whatever she said or did, his soul and eyes followed her. He seemed to be of a quiet and modest disposition, though report said that he had once been a terrible rake but this did not injure him in the opinion of Maria Gavrilovna, who—like all young ladies in general—excused with pleasure follies that gave indication of boldness and ardour of temperament.

But more than everything else—more than his tenderness, more than his agreeable conversation, more than his interesting pallor, more than his arm in a sling—the silence of the young hussar excited her curiosity and imagination. She could not but confess that he pleased her very much; probably he, too, with his perception and experience, had already observed that she made a distinction between him and others; how was it then that she had not yet seen him at her feet or heard his declaration? What restrained him? Was it timidity, inseparable from true love, or pride, or the coquetry of a crafty wooer? It was an enigma to her. After long reflection, she came to the conclusion that timidity alone was the cause of it, and she resolved to encourage him by greater attention and, if circumstances should render it necessary, even by an exhibition of

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tenderness. She prepared a most unexpected *dénouement*, and waited with impatience for the moment of the romantic explanation. A secret of whatever nature it may be always presses heavily upon the female heart. Her stratagem had the desired success; at least, Bourmin fell into such a reverie, and his black eyes rested with such fire upon her, that the decisive moment seemed close at hand. The neighbours spoke about the marriage as if it were a matter already decided upon, and good Praskovia Petrovna rejoiced that her daughter had at last found a lover worthy of her.

On one occasion, the old lady was sitting alone in the parlour, amusing herself with a pack of cards, when Bourmin entered the room, and immediately inquired for Maria Gavrilovna.

"She is in the garden," replied the old lady; "go out to her, and I will wait here for you."

Bourmin went, and the old lady made the sign of the cross and thought, "Perhaps the business will be settled to-day!"

Bourmin found Maria Gavrilovna near the pond, under a willow tree, with a book in her hands, and in white dress—a veritable heroine of romance. After the first few questions and observations, Maria Gavrilovna purposely allowed the conversation to drop, thereby increasing their mutual embarrassment, from which there was no possible way of escape except only by a sudden and decisive declaration.

And this is what happened: Bourmin, feeling

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the difficulty of his position, declared that he had long sought for an opportunity to open his heart to her, and requested a moment's attention. Maria Gavrilovna closed her book and cast down her eyes, as a sign of compliance with his request.

"I love you," said Bourmin : "I love you passionately."

Maria Gavrilovna blushed, and lowered her head still more. "I have acted imprudently in accustoming myself to the sweet pleasure of seeing and hearing you daily,"—Maria Gavrilovna recalled to mind the first letter of St. Preux—"but it is now too late to resist my fate; the remembrance of you, your dear incomparable image, will henceforth be the torment and the consolation of my life, but there still remains a grave duty for me to perform—to reveal to you a terrible secret which will place between us an insurmountable barrier."

"That barrier has always existed," interrupted Maria Gavrilovna hastily: "I could never be your wife."

"I know," replied he calmly, "I know that you once loved, but death and three years of mourning—. Dear, kind Maria Gavrilovna, do not try to deprive me of my last consolation: the thought that you would have consented to make me happy if—."

"Don't speak, for Heaven's sake, don't speak. You torture me."

"Yes, I know, I feel that you would have been

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mine, but—I am the most miserable creature under the sun—I am already married!"

Maria Gavrilovna looked at him in astonishment.

"I am already married," continued Bourmin; "I have been married four years, but I do not know who is my wife, or where she is, or whether I shall ever see her again!"

"What do you say?" exclaimed Maria Gavrilovna. "How very strange! Continue: I will relate to you afterward—— But continue, I beg of you."

"At the beginning of the year 1812," said Bourmin, "I was hastening to Vilna, where my regiment was stationed. Arriving late one evening at one of the post-stations, I ordered the horses to be got ready as quickly as possible, when suddenly a terrible snowstorm came on, and the postmaster and drivers advised me to wait till it had passed over. I followed their advice, but an unaccountable uneasiness took possession of me: it seemed as if some one were pushing me forward. Meanwhile, the snowstorm did not subside; I could endure it no longer, and again ordering out the horses, I started off in the midst of the storm. The driver conceived the idea of following the course of the river, which would shorten our journey by three versts. The banks were covered with snow: the driver drove past the place where we should have come out upon the road, and so we found ourselves in an unknown part of the country

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The storm did not cease; I saw a light in the distance, and I ordered the driver to proceed toward it. We reached a village; in the wooden church, there was a light. The church was open. Outside the railings stood several sledges, and people were passing in and out through the porch.

"'This way! this way!' cried several voices.

"I ordered the driver to proceed.

"'In the name of Heaven, where have you been loitering?' said somebody to me. 'The bride has fainted away; the pope does not know what to do, and we were just getting ready to go back. Get out as quickly as you can.'

"I got out of the sledge without saying a word, and went into the church, which was feebly lit up by two or three tapers. A young girl was sitting on a bench in a dark corner of the church; another girl was rubbing her temples.

"'Thank God!' said the latter, 'you have come at last. You have almost killed the young lady.'

"The old priest advanced toward me, and said,

"'Do you wish me to begin?'

"'Begin, begin, father,' replied I, absently.

"The young girl was raised up. She seemed to me not at all bad-looking. Impelled by an incomprehensible, unpardonable levity, I placed myself by her side in front of the pulpit; the priest hurried on; three men and a chambermaid supported the bride, and occupied themselves only with her. We were married.

"'Kiss each other!' said the witness to us.

"My wife turned her pale face toward me. I

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was about to kiss her, when she exclaimed: 'Oh! it is not he! it is not he!' and fell senseless.

"The witnesses gazed at me in alarm. I turned round, and left the church without the least hindrance, flung myself into the *kibitka*, and cried, 'Drive off!'"

"My God!" exclaimed Maria Gavrilovna. "And you do not know what became of your poor wife?"

"I do not know," replied Bourmin; "neither do I know the name of the village where I was married, nor the post-station where I set out from. At that time, I attached so little importance to my wicked prank that, on leaving the church, I fell asleep, and did not awake till the next morning, after reaching the third station. The servant who was then with me died during the campaign, so that I have no hope of ever discovering the woman upon whom I played such a cruel joke, and who is now so cruelly avenged."

"My God! my God!" cried Maria Gavrilovna, seizing him by the hand: "then it was you! And you do not recognise me?"

Bourmin turned pale—and threw himself at her feet.































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